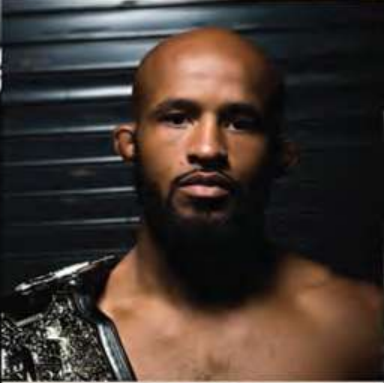


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MAGAZINE

LAST ISSUE
COLLECTOR'S ITEM





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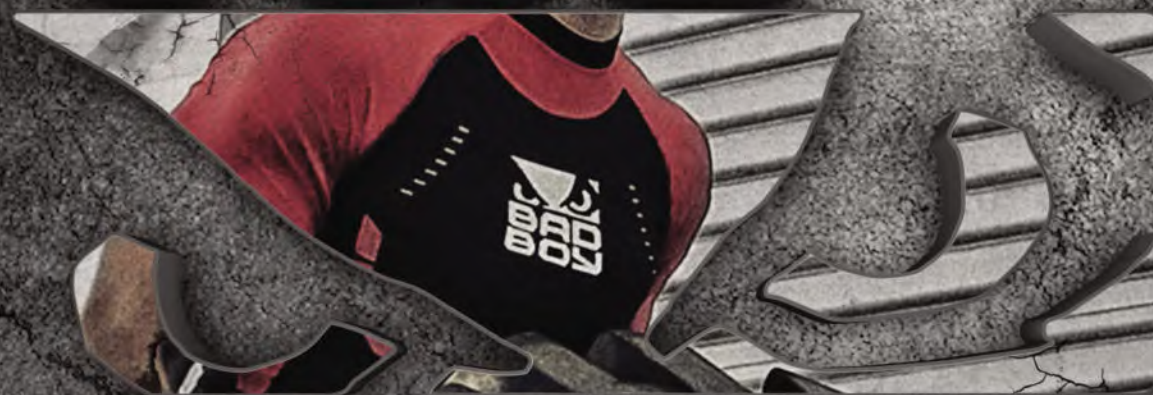


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Rafael Dos Anjos has reached the peak of the lightweight division. Now the Brazilian champion has his eyes on another prize: becoming the greatest fighter of all time.

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The UFC's first Polish champion honed her striking skills picking up six world Muay Thai titles. Now, after only three fights in the Octagon, Joanna Jedrzejczyk is drawing comparisons to Chuck "The Iceman" Liddell.

ON THE COVER

For our final issue we created a cover that includes every fighter who claimed a championship, an interim title, or unified a belt in the Octagon during *UFC: The Official Magazine's* print run from UFC 100 to UFC 189.

Photography by: Jeff Bottari, Josh Hedges, Jim Kemper, Nick Laham, Elliott Raymond, Mike Roach

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UNDISPUTED

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To honor National Hispanic Heritage Month, we turned to five UFC fighters and asked them to share their cultural history and how their families and communities have impacted their lives in and out of the Octagon.

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Joanna Jedrzejczyk
Photography by JAMES LAW

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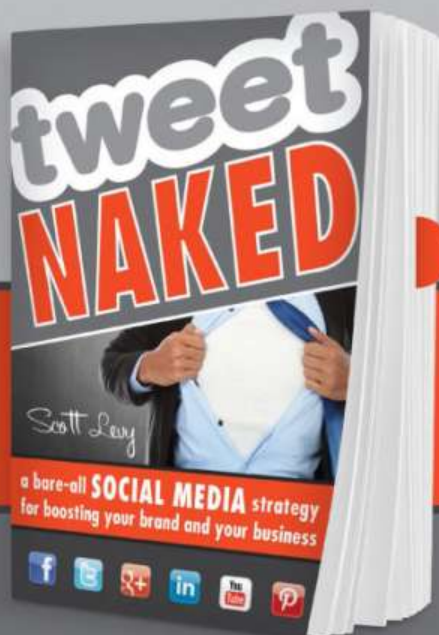
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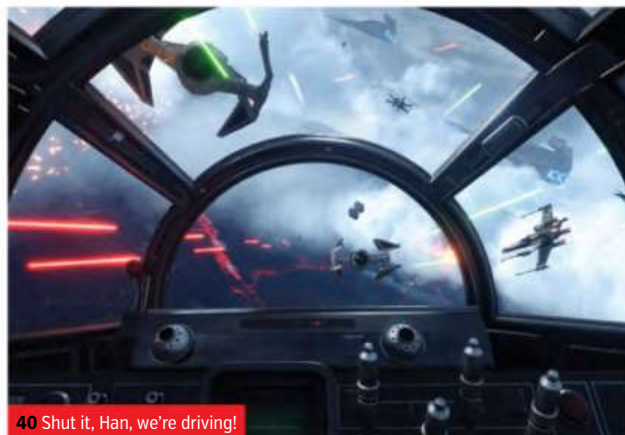
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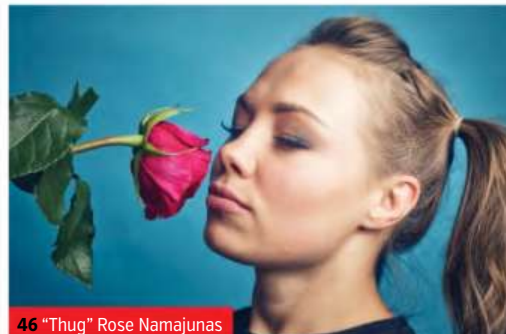
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JOHNSON *vs* DODSON 2

WORLD FLYWEIGHT CHAMPIONSHIP

ARLOVSKI
vs **MIR**

HEAVYWEIGHT BOUT

JOHNSON
vs **MANUWA**

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT BOUT

VANZANT *vs* **CHAMBERS**

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Editor's Letter

Seth Kelly



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: RANDY LAYBOURNE, SETH KELLY, JAMES LAW

To borrow a phrase from Mike Goldberg, it is all over. This is the final issue of *UFC: The Official Magazine*. I launched the title in 2009 from a prototype I developed and pitched to the UFC in 2007. During the span of time between the initial pitch and publishing the first test issue ahead of UFC 100, I really didn't think the magazine was going to happen. I am so thankful that it did. Working on *UFC* has been both the most challenging and the most rewarding experience in my professional career. I have had the pleasure of working with and learning from some of the most talented people I have ever encountered.

I'd like to thank Dana White, Lorenzo Fertitta and Frank Fertitta III for trusting me with the UFC brand and giving me a shot at editing the magazine. Without Jim Byrne, Kevin Hyson and Rich Antoniello, the magazine would have never launched at all.

Thank you to Bryan Johnston, Craig Borsari, Heidi Noland and David Safer for your support over the years.

Working as an editor comes with a lot of perks. You get to pursue virtually any subject that interests you by creating a story around it. The process of making a magazine, however, is a real pain in the ass. You need a talented cast of characters working in concert to make something worth picking up off the rack in an airport newsstand. The magazine would not be what it is without former creative director Brant Louck, UFC editorial director and the most prolific writer in MMA history, Thomas Gerbasi, Brian Good, Jim Kemper, Laura Gilbert, Ant Evans, Mark Rhyne, Larry Menkes, Bill Shaw and the UFC's house photographers, Josh Hedges, Mike Roach, Jeff Bottari, Elliott Raymond and Brandon Magnus. I also want to thank the small army of freelancers who have contributed to the title.

No two people had more positive impact on the magazine than the two guys with me in the photo above—creative director Randy Laybourne and photographer James Law. When these two came on board in 2012, they took the magazine to a level I never could have imagined. If they had bailed out, the wheels would have fallen off this thing a long time ago.

I also want to thank my wife, Trish. Over the course of this magazine's run, she married me, gave me two beautiful baby girls and reminded me what's truly important every step of the way.

Thank you to the fighters for giving us the time to tell your stories. And, of course, thank you to all of our readers around the globe. I'll be watching the fights and all the story lines to come right alongside you.

SETH KELLY, Editor in Chief

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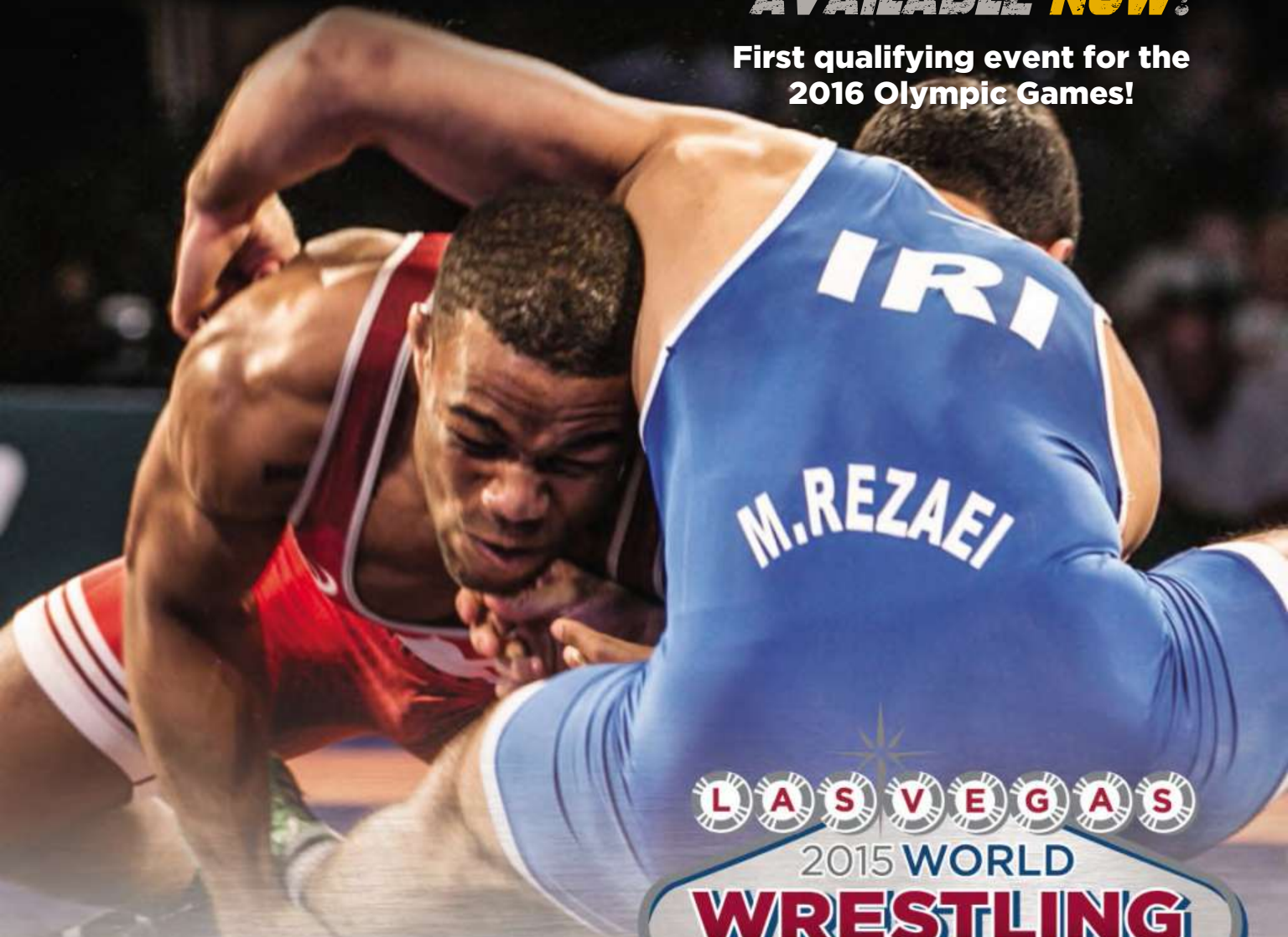
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THE MAIL SACK

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PHOTO OF THE MONTH

Wifey and I went out to Vegas for a few days for a quick getaway. I had signed up for the Ulti-Man 5K, and when I went to the Expo and to pick up my race packet on Friday, I snagged a couple of photo ops, including this winner with Forrest Griffin. I had a great time! I can't wait for next year!

DEREK REED
via email



Derek, we're going to add to your streak of UFC light heavyweight champion mementos and send you a glove signed by Daniel "DC" Cormier.



LETTER OF THE MONTH

This past week has been a trying time for the community of Lafayette, Louisiana, after the senseless movie theater shooting that took the lives of innocent victims and wounded others. It was a welcome relief to read a positive article about a true individual, Daniel Cormier—someone who represents the work ethic, strong morals and winning attitude that so many of us in South Louisiana strive to adhere to in our day-to-day lives. We will bounce back and fight on just like Daniel. I hope one day I can meet the man that is making our city proud.

PHILIP MARTIN
Lafayette, Louisiana



Philip, until that day comes, enjoy your glove signed by Daniel Cormier.



FAN IN THE FIGHT CAPITAL

I went to my first-ever UFC Fan Expo this year with my wife, and it was the best experience. The fighters showed that they really care about their fans. Waiting in lines was well worth the time. I got two of my mags signed by Cain Velasquez and Nate Diaz. It was awesome. Thank you so much for the experience.

ERIK G.
Las Vegas



TRUE WARRIORS

My team watched every UFC fight while we were in Africa. We had to wait until 2 a.m. to watch it, but it was well worth it!

D.K.
via email

FAMILY TRADITION

This was our second year attending the UFC fan expo as a family. It was an awesome experience, and we got to meet many more great fighters. UFC 189 was the greatest event, and although I wanted Chad Mendes to win, I really have to respect that Conor McGregor is a great fighter and that the best man won that night. I can't wait for Jose Aldo to meet him in the future. Thanks, UFC, for a great Fan Expo!

JESUS PERALTA
via email





Stephanie Johnson
Team Nutrishop Athlete

Eric Nelson Photography

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HOW TO GET UP FROM GUARD



STEP 1

This is a great technique for getting up off the mat when you can't use the fence to wall walk. With my opponent in my guard, I anticipate his punches and use both my hands to secure his wrist.



STEP 2

I extend his wrist as far from me as possible with my left hand while posting up on my right arm and initiate a hip heist to get back to my feet. If you don't keep wrist control your opponent will take your back!



STEP 3

I circle toward my opponent and use my hand currently controlling his wrist to get an underhook by dropping my elbow and hooking underneath his right arm. From there I can strike from the clinch or push away and reset.

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Letters

From The Readers



BEAST IN THE EAST

I live in India, and here people worship cricket. But I have been practicing MMA for more than four years now in every gym I could find in Mumbai and all across the country. MMA pushes my limits to new heights, and there is no greater sport for me in the world. Thank you, UFC, for showing to us fans that we, too, can become warriors. All we have to do is look for the power within.

MAHAAKSHAY CHAKRABORTY
Mumbai, India

BIGGER THAN GUINNESS

Now that the most important Irishman since St. Patrick, Conor McGregor, has got his hands on that UFC title, surely it can't be long in Ireland before the UFC becomes bigger than Guinness!

OWEN HOLLIFIELD
South Wales, U.K.

THE COLLECTOR

Thought I would share my grail collection of UFC memorabilia. I've been a fan for so many years, and it's great that my collection really shows my devotion to the sport.

FRAN O'REILLY
via email



FAN SINCE THE LIL' DAYS

Here's a pic of me with Jens "Lil' Evil" Pulver. I was 15 when I saw my first UFC event, and I was hooked. Now, 18 years later, the passion is still well intact and stronger than ever. I converted my wife into a fan, and she has been to five events with me in just two years. I love this sport!

AARON GEE
via email



HANGING WITH HAMMER

This was really cool! I took my kids to one of their wrestling tournaments in Fremont, Ohio, and guess who was there: UFC Hall of Famer himself, Mark "The Hammer" Coleman.

SHANE GROSSMAN
via email

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FROM THE PRESIDENT



UFC has never been a company that stands still too long looking around to admire the view or to appreciate what it's done in the sport of mixed martial arts. The world moves too fast for that, and we're continuing our vision to be an iconic global sports brand.

I'm proud of what *UFC: The Official Magazine* has done over the past several years and of the world-class coverage we've provided. Now we believe that it's time for us to take all the features and content you've enjoyed to the next level through our digital platforms.

Simply put, our fans live and breathe our content online. This past summer we had a record-breaking run of Web traffic to UFC.com, record views for our UFC Embedded series and incredible growth for UFC FIGHT PASS. Plus, our efforts on social media continue to position us as a powerful force in the world of sports—and we're just getting started.

As a result, we're going all-in on our digital platforms to provide you with access to innovative video content, breaking UFC news and in-depth features on your favorite athletes, and we're working on further developing our mobile apps and platforms to ensure that great UFC content is always at your fingertips.

In other words, this isn't a good-bye. We're just moving from print to digital and making things bigger and better for the rest of this record-breaking year of 2015 and beyond.

Get ready, it's going to be a fun ride. I'll see you at the fights.

DANA WHITE
UFC President

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REFRESHING
TASTE.**



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EIRE APPARENT

JULY 11, 2015
UFC 189:
MENDES VS. MCGREGOR
MGM GRAND GARDEN ARENA
LAS VEGAS, NEVADA

There was no shortage of Irish flags flying amongst the record crowd of more than 11,500 fans packed into the MGM Grand Garden Arena to watch the UFC 189: Mendes vs. McGregor weigh-ins. "The Notorious" Conor McGregor fanned the flames after making weight, saying, "Tomorrow night I'm gonna cut him in half. I'm ready to go for Ireland, for my country." McGregor has made a habit of backing up his words in the Octagon, and he did it again by finishing Chad Mendes in the second round to claim the interim featherweight title.

Photography by JOSH HEDGES/ZUFFA, LLC
VIA GETTY IMAGES



HURRICANE FORCE

Stephen "Wonderboy" Thompson (right) cemented his place as a contender in the welterweight division when he starched Jake "The Juggernaut" Ellenberger with a spinning hook kick, ending the fight in the first round. Thompson executed a perfect strategy, defending all three of Ellenberger's takedown attempts and staying out of the clinch. The win made it five in a row for Thompson and netted a Performance of the Night bonus.

Photography by MITCH VIQUEZ/ZUFFA, LLC
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JULY 12, 2015

**THE ULTIMATE FIGHTER 21 FINALE:
AMERICAN TOP TEAM VS. BLACKZILIANs**
MGM GRAND GARDEN ARENA
LAS VEGAS, NEVADA



LEAVE NO DOUBT

Bantamweight champion TJ Dillashaw (left) erased all doubts when he stopped Renan Barao with strikes in the fourth round to defend his title. The win bookends the fifth-round stoppage victory Dillashaw turned in to wrest the title from “The Baron” at UFC 173. While some speculated whether the champion could stop Barao—arguably one of the most dominant fighters in MMA history—again, Dillashaw did not share that opinion. “He brought it,” said Dillashaw after the win. “But I expected to dominate the fight. I knew he was a tough fighter, but I expected to win every round.”

Photography by JEFF BOTTARI/ZUFFA, LLC
VIA GETTY IMAGES

JULY 25, 2015
UFC ON FOX:
DILLASHAW VS. BARAO 2
UNITED CENTER
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS







THE WORLD'S MOST DOMINANT ATHLETE

AUGUST 1, 2015
UFC 190:
ROUSEY VS. CORREIA
HSBC ARENA
RIO DE JANEIRO, BRAZIL

Challenger Bethe Correia [right] manufactured a rivalry with women's bantamweight champion "Rowdy" Ronda Rousey through trash talk and earning wins over Rousey's training partners Shayna Baszler and Jessamyn Duke. It earned the Brazilian a title shot and the wrath of the most dominant athlete in sports today. Rousey [left] moved her record to a perfect 12-0 when she landed a right hand on Correia that planted the challenger on the mat. In just 34 seconds the fight was over. When asked about her performance following the win, Rousey simply stated, "I went out of my way to knock her out."

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ASH IS BACK, BABY

Bruce Campbell revives a cult classic in *Ash vs. Evil Dead*, and he brought his boomstick with him

By SETH KELLY

For the first time since 1992, Bruce Campbell will spit out a wake of smashed deadites and one-liners as Ash Williams in the new series *Ash vs. Evil Dead* on Starz. Here the veteran actor talks about his new show, his career and shooting John Malkovich in the face.

YOU TRANSITIONED TO VIDEO-GAME ACTING WITH A ROLE ON *CALL OF DUTY: ADVANCED WARFARE*. CAN YOU DESCRIBE THE JOY OF VIRTUALLY SHOOTING JOHN MALKOVICH IN THE FACE?

It was pretty awesome, man. You're going to get some haters out there. I've seen some of the pushback on Twitter. Guys saying, "Whoa, who do you think you are shooting Malkovich?" And I'm like, "Suck it, bitch, there's a new sheriff in town." It's *Call of Duty*, man, the most popular game in the history of civilization. My 27-year-old son was finally impressed. He couldn't give a shit about 98 percent of what I'm doing, but *Call of Duty* got his attention because he's a gamer. I finally got on his radar, and I think that's pretty funny.

WHAT CAN YOU TELL ME ABOUT ASH VS. *EVIL DEAD*?

Here's what you need to know. If you like *Evil Dead* movies, you got a lot of *Evil Dead* coming—more *Evil Dead* than you've ever seen in your life. With a TV series, holy shit, that's a lot of content. That's a lot of monsters, beheadings, axes, chainsaws, you name it. And it's on Starz, so there are no restrictions.

IS ASH STILL HOLDING IT DOWN AT S-MART?

Ash is barely holding on, period. He's a guy who's been rode hard and put away wet. He didn't want to get involved with any of this, but, due to his own folly, he brings it back upon himself and the entire world. He's the guy who has to now save the entire world, and he's not the right guy. He should not make any decisions.

WHERE DOES THE NEW SERIES FIT IN THE CULT *EVIL DEAD* CANON?

The *Evil Dead* movies have morphed a little bit. The first *Evil Dead* is kind of a melodrama. It's not sophisticated enough, in my opinion, to be a satire or funny. It's funny because it's so extreme. Dialogue like, "We can't bury Shelly, she's a friend of ours." There's some good filmmaking skill, but it's an achingly low-budget movie. But it had a certain energy to it, and, like the filmmakers, it picks up speed as it goes because we actually got better as it went.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

It was supposed to be a six-week shoot that went 12 weeks, so we were grinding it out. We had never worked this much on a project before—so you can't help but get better. I got better as an actor and more comfortable in front of the camera. The lighting got better. Sam did crazier stuff.

DO YOU THINK THAT WAS PART OF THE APPEAL OF THE OLD *EVIL DEAD* FILMS?

These aren't tight, slick, franchise movies. That's kind of what I like about the series.



They came out of nowhere. The first one was financed by doctors and dentists out of Detroit. The second one was financed by Dino De Laurentiis, the third one by Universal—so they are all over the place. Ironically, in my life and my career, that is the first and last studio motion picture from a major production company. *Army of Darkness* was my one-hit wonder. If I had to have one movie to star in for a major studio, I'll take *Army of Darkness* any day of the week.

WHAT'S THE BALANCE OF COMEDY AND HORROR IN *ASH VS. EVIL DEAD*?

Our motto is take the horror seriously. We're not winking at monsters. If there's a monster, it has to be dealt with seriously. Once you vanquish it, there's room for trash talking. The one-liners will be on parade. Ash has never had this much dialogue before.

ARE YOU DOING ANY OF THE WRITING?

No, but I'm pretty doggone familiar with the character. And, as a producer, I have some input with the story. That's important to all of it. You have to create an idea that will last potentially for five years.

ARE YOU READY FOR FIVE YEARS OF HAVING A CHAINSAW FOR A HAND?

No, but I have to get ready for it. If the masses in love with *Evil Dead* like what we give 'em, they may want more. You have to give the masses what they want! The last *Evil Dead* movie was 24 years ago: That's as long as my current marriage! They have not stopped tormenting me at conventions since.

DID THE ABUSE AT THE CONVENTIONS MAKE YOU IDENTIFY WITH GEORGE R.R. MARTIN AND THE FLACK HE GETS OVER WRITING HIS NEXT *GAME OF THRONES* INSTALLMENT?

I have no sympathy for that guy because he's going to have tens of millions of dollars rolling into his bank account for years to come. That show, I have to say, is so awesome. He deserves every penny he gets. I love it when people prove to the world that really high-quality entertainment does exist, and that show is proof.

DOES *ASH VS. EVIL DEAD* MEET THAT STANDARD?

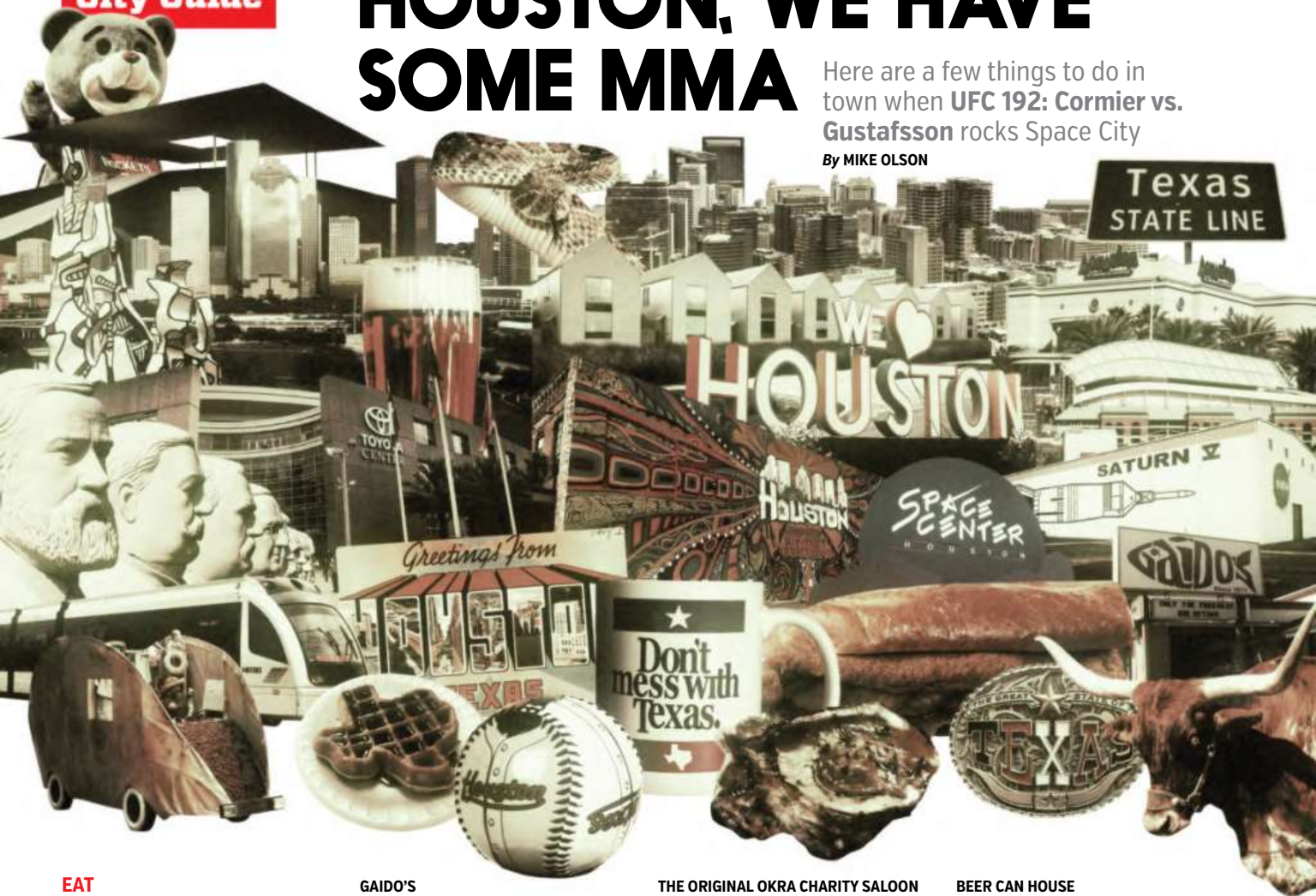
I just watched the first couple of episodes, and I'm pretty delighted. You never know what you're going to get until you put it all together. ☉

ASH VS. EVIL DEAD DEBUTS OCTOBER 31 ON STARZ. FOR MORE INFORMATION GO TO STARZ.COM.

HOUSTON, WE HAVE SOME MMA

Here are a few things to do in town when **UFC 192: Cormier vs. Gustafsson** rocks Space City

By MIKE OLSON



EAT

VIC AND ANTHONY'S STEAKHOUSE

The best steakhouse in the city is also in the running for best restaurant overall. Pace yourself on side dishes like the duck-fat fries or you won't be able to savor every morsel of the rib eye topped with bone-marrow bordelaise.

vicandanthony.com; 713-228-1111

FRENCH'S CHICKEN

French's has been the toast of the town since 1969, serving fried chicken with a spicy Creole twist (think boudin, dirty rice and a jalapeño with every order). Head to the original location on Scott Street: Locals swear their yardbird is still the best.

frenchschicken.com;
713-748-2233

MOLINA'S CANTINA

You can't do Houston without scarfing down some Jose's Dip (queso filled with spicy ground beef) at George H.W. Bush's favorite Tex-Mex restaurant in town.

molinasrestaurants.com;
713-782-0861

GAIDO'S

Gulf oysters fresh off the boat make a trip to Gaido's worth the trek down I-45 to Galveston Island. Make sure to chase it with a bowl of the signature Watkins' bisque (creamy lobster soup with sherry), a favorite since 1911.

gaidos.com; 409-761-5500

DRINK

PETROL STATION

Located in a refurbished gas station (the old pumps are now patio space), the bar with the best beer selection in Houston is also home to city's best burger. The Star Wars-inspired Rancor comes with a comically large patty, bacon and a fried egg on top.

713-957-2875

THE PASTRY WAR

Named for an 1838 Mexico-versus-France skirmish that you've never heard of, this downtown mezcateria takes small-batch tequila and mescal so seriously that they've blacklisted dozens of brands that don't properly respect the craft.

thepastrywar.com; 713-225-3310

THE ORIGINAL OKRA CHARITY SALOON

Toast a good cause with every drink at OKRA. Launched by the city's brightest restaurant owners, this speakeasy donates 100 percent of its proceeds to charity (nearly \$600,000 so far).

friedokra.org; 713-237-8828

SEE

SPACE CENTER HOUSTON

All of the OG interstellar all-stars are here at this NASA center: a *Mercury 9* capsule, an *Apollo 17* command module, even a *Saturn V* rocket. But that Space Shuttle *Independence* is actually a replica. Isn't that some bullshit?

spacecenter.org; 281-244-2100

IFLY HOUSTON

Enjoy some low-fi zero gravity at this indoor skydiving venue, with its 1,600-horsepower vertical wind tunnel. (Two "flights" cost about 70 bucks.) Neil Armstrong would not be impressed, but don't let that stop you.

houston.iflyworld.com;
281-942-4359

BEER CAN HOUSE

Call it folk art if you must, but we call it awesome. Over the years, Houstonian John Milkovich drank about 50,000 cans of suds, then turned them into this thoroughly weird, unstable house.

beercanhouse.org; 713-926-6368

TWILIGHT EPIPHANY SKYSPACE

Made of grass, concrete, stone and steel, this trippy art installation at Rice University is equipped with a mind-bending LED light show that begins about 40 minutes before sunrise and at sunset daily. Make a reservation, then contemplate your place in the universe.

skyspace.rice.edu; 713-348-4758



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THE TICKET

It's sequel season! Rocky Balboa, James Bond and Johnny Depp playing a guy with a bald spot are back! **By MIKE OLSON**

CREED
NOVEMBER 25

Back in 1985, a 42-year-old, still-chiseled Apollo Creed (Carl Weathers) came out of retirement to kick Ivan Drago's ass and, with the help of a classy Uncle Sam getup and a James Brown performance, make the USA proud. The rest was fake history: Apollo bled out in the ring, inspiring his pal Rocky (Sylvester Stallone) to avenge him *and* single-handedly end the Cold War in the process. Three decades later, the son Apollo never met, Adonis (Michael B. Jordan), is ready to enter the family business, but stepping into dad's star-spangled trunks will require a stop in Philly to convince Rock to become his trainer.

Why get excited about the seventh movie in the franchise, particularly when Stallone himself admits he planned to hang up his trademark mumble after 2006's *Rocky Balboa*? Look no further than writer and director Ryan Coogler (*Fruitvale Station*), who sweet-talked Sly into signing on with a compelling script that forces Rocky to channel his inner Mickey and even face his own mortality. That's right, the studio description warns that Rocky will be facing "an opponent more deadly than any he faced in the ring" (cough, cancer, cough), so this could be the champ's swan song. Or we'll be writing about *Creed V* in 2027. Whichever.



FERRELL TAKES THE FIELD
SEPTEMBER 12

Last spring training, Will Ferrell played for 10 different baseball teams in one marathon day, manning every position on the diamond in the process. Bask in his display of pudgy, middle-aged athletic ineptitude in this HBO/Funny or Die special that chronicles the hilariously uncoordinated proceedings.



BLACK MASS
SEPTEMBER 18

Johnny Depp steps into the skin of Irish-American gangster James "Whitey" Bulger, the most violent man in South Boston (and that's saying something), who also pulled double-duty as an FBI informant. It's gonna be wicked awesome!



THE MARTIAN
OCTOBER 2

Presumed dead by a crew that hightailed it home, astronaut Mark Watney (Matt Damon) must go all *Apollo 13* to use his meager resources and wits to stay alive on Mars until the cavalry arrives.

THE WALK
OCTOBER 2

French high-wire walker Philippe Petit (Joseph Gordon-Levitt) sneaks to the top of the World Trade Center, somehow strings a cable between the Twin Towers and goes for a stroll 1,300 feet above the ground. Pay up for IMAX to have your mind properly blown.



CRIMSON PEAK
OCTOBER 16

Guillermo del Toro sees your found-footage horror and raises you a throwback gothic tale that's a fitting homage to *The Omen* and *The Exorcist* in this old-fashioned tale of girl-moves-in-with-boy-and-gets-driven-mad-by-bloodthirsty-sentient-house.

ROCK THE KASBAH
OCTOBER 23

Can Bill Murray make even Afghanistan funny? Director Barry Levinson helms the film about a washed-up music manager who gets stranded in the Middle East on a USO tour. And the answer is yes.



SPECTRE
NOVEMBER 6

As MI6 smolders, James Bond (Daniel Craig) winds up on a collision course with the leader of SPECTRE played by Christoph Waltz, gets down with Monica Bellucci—at 50 the franchise's oldest-ever eye candy—and drives his Aston Martin like it's a damn rental.



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THE PREDATOR

One of the first true mixed martial artists to compete in the Octagon, **Don “The Predator” Frye** looks back at some of his greatest UFC moments

UFC 8 and Ultimate Ultimate 1996 tournament champion Don “The Predator” Frye remains a fan favorite two decades after he blazed a trail through the UFC’s dark ages. Here the MMA icon and host of the popular “Predator Predictions” online show talks about his signature bouts in the Octagon. And you can watch every match right now on UFCFIGHTPASS.com.



Frye celebrates his win in the finals of the eight-man tournament at UFC 8: David vs. Goliath, the only UFC card ever staged in Puerto Rico.



UFC pioneers Don Frye (left) and Dan Severn.

“I FIGURED IF I COULD GET KICKED BY A HORSE, I WOULD BE OK GETTING KICKED BY A PERSON.”

HOW DID YOU GET INTO THE UFC?

Through my friend and wrestling coach Dan Severn, who whupped on Royce Gracie for 15 minutes with no training. After that event he called me up. I became Dan’s chief sparring dummy. Dan passed my name on to Art Davie, who ran the UFC at the time. People knew I was a college wrestler, but I was also a pro boxer with eight fights under my belt, and I’d competed in judo for a year. Plus, I used to shoe horses. I figured if I could get kicked by a horse, I would be OK getting kicked by a person.

WITH WRESTLING, BOXING AND JUDO ALL IN YOUR SKILL SET, IT SOUNDS LIKE YOU KNEW YOU’D HAVE AN ADVANTAGE OVER THE ONE-DISCIPLINE MARTIAL ARTISTS AND BRAWLERS OF THE DAY?

I had an advantage because I’d been in some scary situations

before. And I’d been with Dan when he’d won the UFC, so I knew what to expect—I knew the Octagon, I knew the crowd and the pressure. And knowing what to expect is 90 percent of the preparation. I went in there to rip their heads off. I beat [Thomas] Ramirez in eight seconds, Sam Adkins, who was 6-foot-3, in 50 seconds, and then I won the final against Gary Goodridge.

WHAT WAS IT LIKE FIGHTING THREE TIMES IN ONE NIGHT?

At UFC 8 there was no resting between fights. I had 30 or 40 minutes between fights, but it was 105 degrees with 100 percent humidity that night in San Juan, and there was no air-conditioning in the building. You were sweating, losing fluids and getting tired just sitting there. I drank as much water as I could.



Frye squares up with Gary Goodridge at UFC 8.

WHAT DID YOU THINK WHEN YOU SAW GOODRIDGE? HE MUST HAVE HAD 30 POUNDS ON YOU IN THE FINAL?

I didn't pay attention to who I would be fighting until I got in the Octagon. When I did I thought, *Goddamn, you are a big son of a bitch!* We were like two cats fighting over a bowl of milk. It wasn't pretty, but it was entertaining while it lasted. It was kind of anticlimactic, going through them that fast—four minutes in total. I got a big head. I thought I was God's gift to fighting. But I went home and found I still needed to pick my dog's crap off the lawn. [Laughs]

YOU GOT COCKY? HOW DID THAT IMPACT YOUR GAME?

I beat up Amaury Bitetti at UFC 9, so my head got even bigger. Then I went into the UFC 10 tournament, and I looked at guys like Mark Hall and Mark Coleman, who I lost to in the final, and thought, *You poor*

Frye stopped Amaury Bitetti by TKO at UFC 9: Motor City Madness.



bastards, you have to face the great Don Frye! And you saw what happened: Coleman won the final. Against Hall I went to the body rather than the head and went 10 minutes. I was tired as hell after that. In the second round I wasted even more energy against a hell of

an athlete in Brian Johnston. I was so happy when he tapped to elbows, because I was beat, done, exhausted.

AND YOU STILL HAD FUTURE HALL OF FAMER MARK COLEMAN IN THE FINAL.

I can say now I almost didn't come out for that fight. I was so tired, and I was completely dehydrated. I was backstage thinking about pulling out, and then I looked at the alternates who'd have taken my place and thought, *I'm not having you take my spot!* So I went back out there and took my loss like a man.

WHAT DO YOU REMEMBER FROM YOUR FINAL UFC APPEARANCE, WINNING THE ULTIMATE ULTIMATE TOURNAMENT OF LEGENDS IN 1996?

It was probably the best night of my career. I rematched with Gary. And for heavyweights, we put on a hell of a fight. Then I fought Hall again, who was an alternate, but I was at the top of my game, and he went down that night. Then I fought Tank Abbott in the final, and we went toe to toe for 90 seconds.

WAS GETTING INTO A SHOOTOUT WITH ABBOTT THE PLAN GOING IN?

My team begged me not to do that, but I figured it would be shits and giggles. He put me on my ass, and, holy shit, he hurt me. He kept coming, and we headbutted each other. I recovered and he didn't. I won the fight with a broken hand. Beating Tank that night—serving Tank Abbott at the top of his game, surviving what he hit me with—that was a hell of an accomplishment to leave the UFC on. I walked away with two belts in my hands. I'm happy I did that. ○



Mark Coleman (top) handed Frye his lone Octagon loss at UFC 10.



In his final Octagon appearance, Frye submitted Tank Abbott.

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live broadcasts of select UFC fight cards and live events promoted by UFC partners. For more info, go to UFCFIGHTPASS.com.

TRAINING MUSIC

When women's strawweight "12 Gauge" Paige VanZant trains, she cranks music that's older than she is

By CHUCK MINDENHALL Photography by JAMES LAW

WHAT DO YOU BLAST IN THE GYM WHEN IT'S TIME TO TRAIN?

For me it's not really listening to specific artists, but I really like hip-hop and country music. But when I train I like to listen to late-'80s and '90s hip-hop like Tupac Shakur—that stuff gets me in the fighting mood. But any '90s hip-hop is what I like to listen to. I have a '90s hip-hop station on my Pandora. I like Tupac, Too \$hort, Eazy-E....

DO YOU LIKE TO MIX IT UP TO MATCH THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF TRAINING? FOR INSTANCE, WHAT DO YOU LISTEN TO IF YOU'RE DOING ROADWORK?

Usually it's hip-hop. But sometimes I'll listen to some mainstream stuff that's on the radio right now. Just stuff that will get me amped up. Fast-paced happy songs. It usually helps to get me pumped up to run or lift weights or spar.

I KNOW YOU HAVE A DANCE BACKGROUND. IS THERE ANY MUSIC YOU SIMPLY CAN'T TRAIN TO THAT MAKES YOU TAP YOUR FOOT TOO MUCH?

Yeah, I absolutely love country music. But it's definitely something I can't train to. It's too happy and too nice, so I like singing that stuff in my car, but not training to it. I get too distracted with it and just want to sit in the back of my truck. ☉



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STAR WARS: BATTLEFRONT

Regardless of what suiting up for the Rebels or the Empire says about your personality, at least you're done improvising your own lightsaber sound effects

By SCOTT JONES

Less a sequel and more a robust reboot to take advantage of next-gen console processing power, *Star Wars: Battlefront* does exactly what the series has been doing for 11 years: It drops you into the Birkenstocks of a low-grade Rebel Alliance fighter (or into the aluminum chaps of a Z-grade Stormtrooper). It gives you weapons. It assigns you objectives. Then it turns you loose—completely loose—in the *Star Wars* universe.

Your battles take place in a variety of pixel-perfect *Star Wars* environs, including Tatooine, Endor, and the frozen wasteland of Hoth. In addition to fighting on foot, you can also commandeer vintage *Star Wars* vehicles like X-Wings, TIE Fighters and Boba Fett's infamous Slave I [which, for some reason, always resembles a duck boot searching for its mate]. Even the Holy Grail of *Star Wars* vehicles—the Millennium Falcon—is in the game. If all this sounds like a *Star Wars*-themed sandbox for you to play in, that's because it is.

Everything in the game is rendered with the utmost fan-centric care. Even the game's sound effects are eerily spot-on; from the *zhu-WHONG* of lightsabers to the *pew-pew* of blasters, if you loved it in the movies—not the miserable prequels; the *real* movies, people—you'll likely find it in the game.

Twelve multiplayer maps built by the multiplayer virtuosos at DICE



will be available at launch, with more on the way. And, yes, your favorite whiny little one-handed Jedi Luke Skywalker is in the game. Boba Fett, Darth Vader and Han Solo are also among the powerful “celebrity” characters in the game—fingers crossed that Admiral Ackbar makes the cut!

Battlefront's central wonder is that it effectively captures the essence of the thousands of small-scale battles that you

and your jackass brother waged with your *Star Wars* action figures when you were kids. The difference is that those battles ended with your mom calling you to the dinner table. The clashes in 2015's *Battlefront*? They end with your wife tearing off your headset to tell you the baby woke up *again*. Your bulletproof response to her: “You have failed me for the last time, admiral!”

FORMAT

Xbox One, PS4, PC

PRICE

\$60

PUBLISHER

Electronic Arts

RELEASE DATE

November 17



HALO 5: GUARDIANS

XBOX ONE

RELEASE DATE: OCTOBER 27

Master Chief is lost and Spartan Locke is tasked with finding the 7-foot-tall knucklehead. Yes, the story somehow means less with each installment—can Chief and Cortana just kiss already?—but with the screws tightened on the already-gleaming multiplayer, *Halo 5* remains one of those shooters that you can't stop playing once you start.



FALLOUT 4

XBOX ONE, PS4, PC

RELEASE DATE: NOVEMBER 10

The game begins on the day that the atomic bombs were officially dropped—October 23, 2077—and takes you to a post-apocalyptic/retro future. Sophisticated, smart and incredibly moving, this is the kind of game that causes you to lose all human contact.



RISE OF THE TOMB RAIDER

XBOX ONE, XBOX 360

RELEASE DATE: NOVEMBER 10

Tombs are back in the new *Raider*—bona fide tombs, not those irritating puzzles that served as “tombs” in the last game. The combat system places more emphasis on stealth this time around, so try to kill people with your ice ax really, really quietly.

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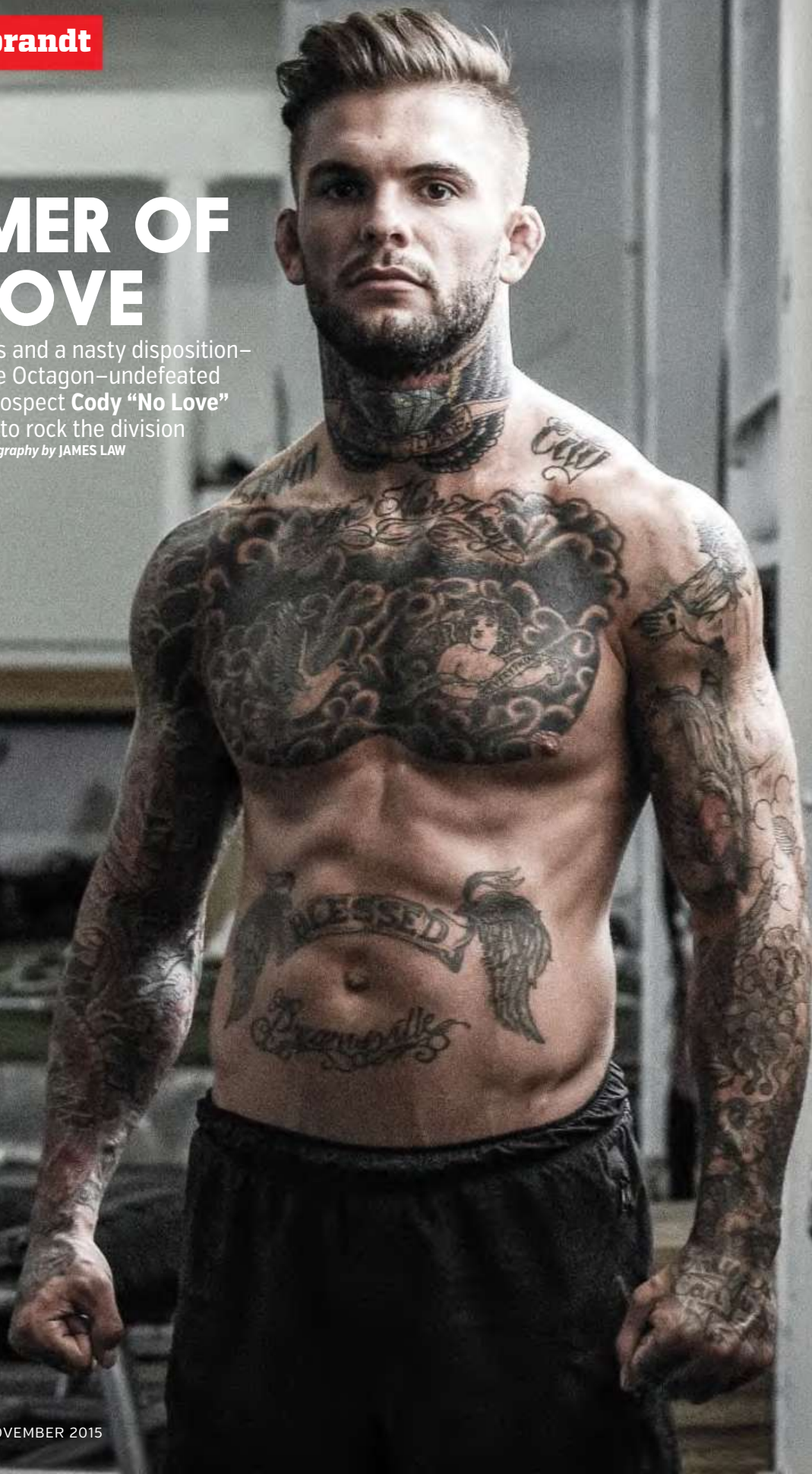
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Up Next
Cody Garbrandt

SUMMER OF NO LOVE

With heavy hands and a nasty disposition—at least inside the Octagon—undefeated bantamweight prospect **Cody “No Love” Garbrandt** is set to rock the division

BY RYAN MCKINNELL *Photography by JAMES LAW*





Cody Garbrandt can tell you the exact moment he knew he wanted to become a professional fighter.

UFC President Dana White likes to credit Bonnar-Griffin for creating the boom years of MMA. As White always says: There is no UFC without Forrest Griffin and Stephan Bonnar. Cody Garbrandt owes a similar debt to that historic scrap.

A 14-year-old Garbrandt, surrounded by his Ohio Lightning Wrestling teammates inside a nondescript hotel room in Danville, Illinois, watched Forrest Griffin and Stephan Bonnar trade shots in *The Ultimate Fighter* finale. Immediately after the fight the mattresses came off the beds and challenges were handed out. The roughhousing came to an abrupt end, however, when Garbrandt double-legged a teammate through a wall. Some improvisational drywall repair with Gorilla Glue and rearranging some hotel-room art cleverly concealed the damage. Garbrandt was similarly marked.

"I remember telling everyone right then and there that I was going to be a UFC fighter." Fast-forward a decade and Garbrandt is stretched out inside his hotel room at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas. His 6-0 record, all wins by knockout, includes his UFC debut win over Marcus Brimage. He's currently eating a fight-week meal of whitefish, peppers, avocado, lemon and dried cranberries in preparation for his second UFC opponent, Henry Briones.

Close by is Maddux Maple, the 9-year-old that Garbrandt befriended five years ago while fighting on the amateur circuit in the Midwest. When they first met, Maple was diagnosed with leukemia and Garbrandt was going through a particularly rough patch in his life. Before ever embarking on a pro career, Garbrandt made Maddux a promise that he would one day fight in the UFC and would bring him along for the ride. And in turn, Maddux promised to beat cancer. 🙏

**"I REMEMBER
TELLING EVERYONE
RIGHT THEN AND
THERE THAT I WAS
GOING TO BE A
UFC FIGHTER."**

"I'M NOT TRYING TO WIN A FIGHT: I'M TRYING TO DESTROY YOU."

On this particular weekend, Maple, whose cancer is currently one year in remission, will walk to the Octagon alongside Garbrandt in what will become a memorable moment for not only the two friends, but also for the entire sport of MMA.

Below Garbrandt's West Wing room a few thousand Irish fans flood the hotel and casino floor in anticipation of seeing their countryman, Conor McGregor, fight Garbrandt's teammate Chad Mendes at UFC 189.

In a few days Garbrandt will fight on the same card, taking on gritty Mexican prospect Briones. He tells a story of how 24 hours earlier Briones greeted him in the hallway with a handshake and a "nice to meet you."

Garbrandt, who goes by the name "No Love," recalls the moment. "I thought to myself, *It is not going to be nice to meet me.* I'm not trying to be your friend: I'm trying to [expletive] you up. I'm not trying to win a fight: I'm trying to destroy you."

Cody Garbrandt and Maddux Maple walk to the Octagon during UFC 189.



Garbrandt's hard-nosed mentality was forged in his hometown: Uhrichsville, Ohio. Lying 90 miles to the south of Cleveland and with a population of 5,413, it's the kind of town where a last name means something. Unfortunately for Garbrandt and his brothers and sisters, their last name didn't have the best reputation.

Garbrandt's father, John Meese, was in and out of prison his whole life. He lost an arm at the age of 12 when he climbed a telephone pole and hit a wire. Some say that's the reason for his life of crime: He lost confidence after the accident. Garbrandt, who took his mother's maiden name, sees it much simpler than that: "He's a coward. People use that stuff as a crutch in life."

His father is currently locked inside Mansfield State Penitentiary for attempted murder and other "bad stuff." One of Garbrandt's uncles is also a guest of the state.

Another uncle, Robert Meese, received a life sentence at the age of 15 when the court tried him as an adult. After getting his sentence reduced, Robert got out with

two-and-a-half-years served and went on to a stellar amateur boxing career. Robert now serves as Garbrandt's boxing coach and a stark reminder of the pitfalls in life for the blossoming bantamweight prospect.

"We were the kids other parents told their children to avoid. That really hurt sometimes, man," he admits. "My mom was an angel. She did everything to the best of her abilities. She would go without eating so we could eat."

In Uhrichsville, "you either get down or you lay down," and the Garbrandts were known for getting down—they had a "name." If your dad and grandpa could get down, then you were expected to get down. If you didn't protect your name, people would walk all over you. "I wasn't a bully at all," says Garbrandt. "I just didn't take any shit."

His comfort with physical contact led him to a state title in wrestling as a freshman. He was an amateur boxer by 16, and in his very first fight he knocked out a Golden Gloves champ. At 18, Garbrandt



became a professional mixed martial artist in an attempt to utilize and combine all of his athletic gifts.

It was around that time he met Maddux Maple. The town already held rallies for young Maddux at football games and the like. Word travels fast when tragedy strikes a small town, and Uhrichsville may force you to “get down” from time to time, but it’s a community that comes together when needed. Garbrandt rallied behind Maddux too, donating fight purses and organizing with local promotions to donate live gates on the cards he fought.

Shortly thereafter, Garbrandt’s career took a critical turn when a random post on social media caught the eye of a UFC legend.

Hey, Urijah Faber, just letting you know: Watch out. I’m coming out to Team Alpha Male one day, mark my words.

“I don’t normally respond to everyone on Twitter, but for some reason I went and looked up some of his fights,” admits “The California Kid” over lunch at a local Las Vegas Whole Foods. “He immediately caught my eye.”

So how many times had Faber actually done something like that; researched an anonymous kid then hitting him up on Twitter? “Once,” answers Faber. Some time

passed, but Garbrandt eventually visited Team Alpha Male in late 2013. By 2014, and after much “testing” from Faber and Co., “No Love” became a full-fledged member of Team Alpha Male. He would go on to make his UFC debut the same year, when he KO’d Marcus Brimage on short notice at UFC 182.

He can recall as if it was yesterday the first time he put on a UFC glove. It makes sense: He only waited half his life to be able to call himself a UFC fighter. “I was never going to put on a UFC glove before I was in the UFC or wear a UFC shirt or anything like that—that just isn’t me. I slid those gloves over my knuckles and felt the leather against my skin: I got goose bumps all over. I woke up so many nights thinking I was UFC champion or had won in the UFC. I’d wake up when I was 15 or 16 and be like, “That was one hell of a dream.”

It isn’t a dream anymore. It’s the Monday after UFC 189, and Garbrandt is lounging poolside with his girlfriend, UFC strawweight superstar Paige VanZant. He is pleased with his decision win over Briones, even though it snapped his streak of finishes.

Reflecting on the weekend, Maddux Maple admits that he was a little nervous when he made the walkout

with Garbrandt, but it was also a ton of fun. Garbrandt talks about how he can’t wait to one day sit Maddux down and explain to him just how much he has done for Garbrandt the person *and* Garbrandt the fighter. Until then, he still has one or two more promises to fulfill.

“If you can understand the essentials of life and being successful, it’s going to run off into your MMA career. I already know I can be a champion, now it’s just about showing everyone else.” ☉



FOLLOW CODY GARBRANDT
@CODY_NOLOVE

NOTHING TO LOSE

Garbrandt’s nickname implies no love for his opponents. But the surging bantamweight prospect fights without fear of losing or, even worse, having any regrets. “If the worst thing that happens to me is that I lose a fight, I’ve lived a damn fine life. I’m not scared,” says Garbrandt. “I’ll go out there and give it everything I’ve got.”

A portrait of Rose Namajunas, a professional mixed martial artist, looking directly at the camera. She has light brown hair and blue eyes, and is wearing a black t-shirt. Her right hand is raised in a peace sign gesture. A large, vibrant red rose is positioned in the foreground, partially obscuring her face. The background is a solid teal color.

Up Next

Rose Namajunas

HERE COMES TROUBLE

With all eyes on the strawweight division, **“Thug” Rose Namajunas** is ready to make her second assault on the title

By E. SPENCER KYTE

Photography by WILLIE PETERSEN



Expectations can cripple an athlete's career and stifle her development, especially if things don't get off to a smooth start. Look around the major leagues, the NHL and NBA and you'll find dozens of examples of future superstars that flamed out before ever making any real impact in their respective sports.

Before Rose Namajunas made her official debut in the Octagon, the MMA media had already begun touting her as the strawweight version of Ronda Rousey.

Part of the historic all-female cast of *The Ultimate Fighter: A Champion Will Be Crowned*, her 12-second flying armbar victory over Kathina Catron in Invicta FC played on an endless loop. A close-up shot of Namajunas smirking to reveal a mouthpiece emblazoned with *The Ultimate Fighter* logo became synonymous with the show. Namajunas more than lived up to the hype.

She submitted Alex Chambers via RNC in the opening round, tapped No. 2 seed Joanne Calderwood in the quarterfinals and needed little more than half a round to submit

Canadian upstart Randa Markos via Kimura and punch her ticket to the finals. With each win came more comparisons to Rousey. Namajunas, who entered the show as the No. 7 seed, came in as the betting favorite against No. 1 seed Carla Esparza. The former Invicta strawweight champion showed the oddsmakers the error of their ways and took advantage of Namajunas' aggressiveness, putting her on the mat time and again before collecting a third-round submission win and the inaugural UFC strawweight title.

"A loss in the beginning part of someone's career is the best thing that can happen, especially at that level," offers Trevor Wittman, the man with the Cheshire cat grin and Rose Namajunas' head coach. "That first fight for the title was the best thing for us because it was taking a look at what was exposed."

All it took was one fight—11 minutes and change—and the lofty expectations that followed Namajunas into the cage had been revisited and revised. After forecasting greatness for her right out of the gate, her one-sided loss to Esparza reminded everyone that the talented and promising Grudge Training Center representative still had a long way to go before reaching her full potential. ➔

**"EVERYTHING
HAPPENS FOR
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**"IF IT FEELS
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KICKS AS
I WANT."**

"I'm still sitting here being a young fighter, and it's going to be that way for a while, but it's not going to be forever," admits the 23-year-old Namajunas, whose professional record stands at 2-2 as she prepares to make her second appearance in the Octagon. "Everything is happening the way it is supposed to happen, and youth is only going to help me."

The loss sent Namajunas and her team back to the gym in search of answers, and just before she was to get back into action, her return appearance was called off at the 11th hour after her opponent failed to make weight and came down with flu-like symptoms the day of the fight.

While she's still waiting for her chance to put the fruits of her efforts in the gym with Wittman on display in competition, the talented prospect is excited about her progress—and her coach still believes that the sky is the limit for his young charge.

"I was obviously the most prepared I ever was, and for it not to happen is a little bit of a letdown," she says of her cancelled UFC 187 showdown with Nina Ansaroff.



"But I'm to the point where it's behind me, and I'm looking forward from here on out. I don't have any regrets—if none of that had happened, I wouldn't have the knowledge that I have right now. Everything happens for a reason, and I'm just really excited to see what I can do from here on out.

"We really feel Rose beat herself," says Wittman of the fight with Esparza. "She threw, what, 15 jump kicks in the first round?"

The veteran coach lets out a laugh.

"She's so athletic that offense is the easy part. It's keeping her in position. You hear it in jiu-jitsu all the time—position before submission—and I feel the same way about striking, wrestling, everything. You have to be in position, and then everything else comes."

If you think that means Namajunas is going to trade in her dynamic offensive arsenal for a more conservative approach in the



Octagon, you'd be mistaken. She's still going to be a ninja, but looking forward it's about being a ninja with a smart approach to making the most of her abundant skills.

"There is still going to be creativity, even with the basics. There are just going to be little tweaks here and there," she offers. "It's about taking it back to the basics, but doing it better than anyone else and doing it differently. I need to conserve my energy better, improve my conditioning, get stronger—the obvious stuff—and let my kicks come naturally.

"If it feels natural, I'll do as many tornado kicks as I want, but there has got to be steps to it."

Despite her early setback, don't expect "Thug Rose" to wilt and fade into the background. "Rose is so darn gifted that sometimes it becomes—I don't want to say 'boring,' but she's got to be able to keep the fire," offers Wittman. "But she's a pleasure to work with, she listens so damn well and she trusts. And as a coach that's what you need.

She's a work in progress—a fighter still in the process of discovering who she is inside the Octagon. Once she puts it all together? Watch out. 🐼

CREATING A MONSTER



It's easy to forget that Rose Namajunas is only 23 and is just four fights into her professional career. Namajunas compares her growing set of skills to a new member of the family, Shadow. "We just got a new

puppy. He's a Dogo Argentino, so he will be 100-plus pounds when he grows up. He's about the size of my other full-grown dog, and he's only five months. Every time I look at him I forget that he's a puppy because of

how big he is, and I treat him like, 'How could you be so stupid?' But he's a puppy and doesn't know anything, and I just forgot. And that's just what's going to happen with me. I'm just a puppy."

FOLLOW ROSE NAMAJUNAS
@ROSENAMAJUNAS



Up Next
Yair Rodriguez

PRIDE OF A NATION

Surging featherweight **Yair “El Pantera” Rodriguez** has the potential to be the UFC’s first Mexican-born superstar

By SPENCER KYTE



PHOTO: MIKE ROACH/ZUFFA, LLC VIA GETTY IMAGES



**"I'M THE ONLY
NATIVE MEXICAN
FIGHTER TAKING
BIG STEPS IN THE
OCTAGON, AND
I'M SO PROUD
OF THAT."**

Yair Rodriguez only needed a pair of fights at the highest level in the sport to make some noise. The 22-year-old native of Parral, Mexico, won the featherweight title in *The Ultimate Fighter: Latin America* finale in his debut. And his sophomore effort, a gritty split-decision win over a game Charles Rosa at UFC 188, earned him Fight of the Night honors and comparisons to Jon Jones and Anthony Pettis.

Rodriguez clearly evolved his game during the seven-month span between his UFC appearances. Against Rosa he displayed a creative striking game and a confidence that was absent from his debut. The professional growth all comes as a

result of Rodriguez making some very difficult choices in order to pursue his dream of becoming a UFC champion.

"El Pantera" left his home in Mexico at the age of 20 to set up shop with a host of Mexican fighters at Team Jackson-Winkeljohn in Albuquerque, New Mexico, to train for the inaugural season of *The Ultimate Fighter: Latin America*.

He clicked with Israel "Izzy" Martinez, and when the wrestling coach headed back to Chicago for another season leading the multiple-time state champions at Montini Catholic, Rodriguez tagged along, trading in the ease and comforts of New Mexico for frosty winters, a strict schedule and household chores meted out by Martinez.

"Yair lives with me," says Martinez, who remodeled his basement to accommodate the talented featherweight prospect. "It's a very disciplined regimen at my house, and he loves it. He didn't like it at first, but he's bought in and shown *huge* progress."

"That was a tough decision," says Rodriguez of the move, "but I made it because I really want this. The process has been tough, but the results are there. I keep working hard every day with Izzy, with coach Mike Valle, with coach Greg Jackson, with coach Winkeljohn—all these guys are supporting me all the time. They are my team and my family too."

Martinez has taken on a hybrid big-brother/fatherly role with Rodriguez and is bringing him up in the family business: wrestling.

He is surrounded by talented young competitors who excel on the mats, and he serves as an assistant coach to Martinez' team at Montini, traveling and training with the squad throughout the season. He wrestles every day, including those days when ditching practice would be the easier, more enjoyable option.

While Martinez and Valle have made Rodriguez the focal point of their team in Chicago, they're all pushing him out of his comfort zone and keeping a tight rein on the promising prospect, intent on giving him every opportunity to achieve his dreams and reach his full potential as a fighter. ➔

Up Next Yair Rodriguez

"He's in a position where he's not happy a lot. And that's the difference between him and where a lot of these other Mexican fighters are," laughs Martinez. "They're going to where they're comfortable—where they're not going to get their asses chewed out."

"No one wants to come to Chicago. No one wants to wrestle every day. No one wants to get a foot up their ass, be told that they can't get the pizza and that they can't go down to Mexico whenever they want. Yair is not allowed to do any of that. He's being pushed hard—just like a 22-year-old kid with his kind of talent should be pushed."

"Coach Valle and myself are going to be available for him 24 hours a day, whatever he needs from us," adds the raspy-voiced wrestling coach. "We're always there for him—guiding him, trying to help him in any way we can in order to make this transition as easy as possible. The training and development revolves around him becoming a UFC champion."

There have been a handful of fighters that competed on each of the UFC's first two events in Mexico City, but only four that picked up victories each time out: Gabriel Benitez, Kelvin Gastelum, Fabricio Werdum and Rodriguez.

Standing alongside Werdum and Gastelum in that select group is a strong indicator of what the future could hold for Rodriguez: The former is the reigning heavyweight champion, the latter has been tabbed for greatness since winning *The Ultimate Fighter* and both are burgeoning stars in the developing Latin American market.

According to Martinez, his 22-year-old charge has greater upside than Gastelum and the potential to be a superstar in the UFC.

"I think Yair is the first of his kind. He has an unbelievable skill set," offers Martinez, who regularly works with Holly Holm, Clay Guida and Cub Swanson, among others. "He's got a chance to come up as a young pup in an awesome stable that we already have built, and he has taken skills from everybody and manufactured his own way of doing things."

"I think there is a lot of potential in Mexico," adds Rodriguez, who hopes to continue his string of being a part of the fight cards in his home country when the UFC debuts in Monterrey later this year. "Cain Velasquez, Kelvin Gastelum—they're Mexican-American, but they're still Mexican. But I'm the only native Mexican taking big steps in the Octagon, and I'm so proud of that. It's been hard, but I think I'm doing well."



With two fights, two wins and favorable comparisons to a pair of elite former champions as a 22-year-old, it's safe to say Rodriguez is indeed doing well. And if things keep progressing as they have, Martinez is confident that championship gold will be in his basement tenant's future.

"Not only is his skill set comparable to Jon Jones and Pettis and those guys, but he's a whole other creature—he's a 22-year-old who has pride on his back and wants to prove that Mexicans are the best fighters in the world."

"He really is going to be the first UFC champion that is a Mexican-born athlete."

You heard it here first. ○



FOLLOW YAIR RODRIGUEZ
@PANTERAUFC

EL PANTERA ON THE LOOSE

When asked whether he tried to make a statement in deploying his updated striking game immediately following his UFC 188 victory, Rodriguez simply said, "When I get into the Octagon I forget everything. I fight with all my soul and my mind." "El Pantera" knew he was going to get some flack from his wrestling coach, Israel Martinez, despite defending nine of Rosa's 14 takedown attempts. "I know Izzy will be angry with me," said Rodriguez after the fight, "but I did my best. That guy is a tough fighter, and I am so happy to win the fight."

PHOTO: MIKE ROACH/ZUFFA, LLC VIA GETTY IMAGES

UFC
FIGHT NIGHT

BARNETT *vs* NELSON

HEAVYWEIGHT BOUT

MOUSASI *vs* CARNEIRO

MIDDLEWEIGHT BOUT

SEP 26
SATURDAY
10P



MAN ON A MISSION

HUSBAND, FATHER AND DEVOUT CHRISTIAN **RAFAEL DOS ANJOS** FACES ARGUABLY THE NASTIEST AND LONGEST LINEUP OF CHALLENGERS OF ANY UFC TITLEHOLDER. IF YOU ASK DOS ANJOS, A VETERAN OF 18 UFC FIGHTS, THOSE CHALLENGERS ARE A GIFT. THEY ARE THE OBSTACLES HE NEEDS TO OVERCOME TO REACH HIS GOAL AND WRITE HIS NAME NEXT TO THE UFC'S TRULY ELITE CHAMPIONS.

BY THOMAS GERBASI
PHOTOGRAPHY BY BRANDON MAGNUS



RAFAEL DOS ANJOS

wasn't really in the mood to talk, but as he sat in the locker room in the bowels of the Amway Center in Orlando, Florida, following his loss to Khabib Nurmagomedov in April of 2014, he did have one phone call to make.

"I called my manager and said, 'Hey, please, get me a fight as soon as possible. I'm in shape, I didn't get hurt—and I want to fight.'"

Dos Anjos had been down this road before. He thought he wouldn't have to travel it after a 4-4 start to his UFC career was followed by a five-fight winning streak. But Russia's Nurmagomedov changed all that with a dominant three-round unanimous-decision win.

The native of Rio de Janeiro would have to start over. But he was used to that.

IN January of 2012, dos Anjos was at a crossroads in his life. In the UFC, he was a journeyman at best, with a .500 record through eight fights. He had a solid reputation as someone who could beat anyone in the lightweight division on any given night, but consistency was an issue. It's not a tag any fighter with championship ambitions wants, but life was good at home with his wife, Cristiane, and their two sons, Rafael and Gustavo.

"I was living a comfortable life in Brazil at that time," he said, "living five minutes away from the gym." But something was missing, and he knew it. In the United

States he would not only be close to the home of the UFC in Las Vegas, but he would also be able to get the consistent world-class training he needed to take his game to the next level.

"I spoke to my wife and told her we've gotta move, we've got to make a change," he said. "If I want to be the best in the world, we needed to take a chance."

When the dos Anjos family set up camp in Southern California, Rafael spoke little English, the cost of living was prohibitive in his new country and almost immediately he had to wonder whether he had made the right choice.

"It's difficult for us as Brazilians," dos Anjos' coach Rafael Cordeiro said. "When

you move from your country to another country, the language is hard to learn, and sometimes you're taking the place from people that have worked here for a long, long time. And it's no different for fighters. They come from different countries to try to make some history. But I believe when you have faith, everything can change."

Dos Anjos thought of his early years, during which the only thing he really had was his faith and two fists. "I grew up in Brazil and had a poor childhood, and I didn't have many opportunities in my life," dos Anjos recalled. "But I knew I had a talent to fight."

That talent took him to the biggest fight promotion in the world, and if moving to





**“IT WAS
NOT EASY
TO GET
HERE, AND
IT WILL NOT
BE EASY
TO TAKE
THIS AWAY
FROM ME.”**

America forced him to tighten his belt, so be it; he had been there before. But he didn't want his family to experience what he knew all too well.

“It was really scary,” he said. “I don't have a rich father or mother. [Laughs] They don't have money to pay my bills, I didn't have anybody to call and we never knew what was going to happen. At that time, neither I nor my kids spoke English at all, and it was a hard time. We lived in a small apartment. The first day we were sleeping here, I put my family to sleep on the carpet because we didn't have a sofa or a bed. We knew only one thing: We always prayed.”

And dos Anjos always trained. In his first fight as a California resident, he submitted

Kamal Shalorus in 100 seconds. By the end of the year he added two more wins over Anthony Njokuani and Mark Bocek, and all of a sudden he had a winning streak, his first since 2009–'10. When a May 2013 victory over Evan Dunham in his home country of Brazil made it four straight, he was being considered as a lightweight contender. But he still fought and trained like a hungry prospect.

“I was investing in my career,” he said. “I fought to make enough money until my next fight. That's how I was living for the past few years. My wife, even when I got tired and didn't believe in myself, she always believed in me more than I did. She always pushed me to just keep working and

said I was going to get it. My kids always support me too, and I could not reach my goals without them. I'm blessed to have them because, even when I felt weak, they pushed me. They said, ‘Let's go daddy. You're going to get it.’”

On August 28, 2013, dos Anjos cemented himself as a true world-title threat with a one-sided decision win over Donald “Cowboy” Cerrone. Then came the Nurmagomedov fight.

“I really thought I had to start all over again.” 🍌

"IF I WANT TO BE THE BEST
IN THE WORLD, WE NEEDED
TO TAKE A CHANCE."



WHEN the dust settled from dos Anjos' loss to the unbeaten Nurmagomedov, the Brazilian veteran went right back to the gym, working with renowned former Chute Boxe coach Cordeiro. Less than two months after his defeat, he was back in the Octagon for a bout against Jason High. The result? Dos Anjos by TKO in the second. On August 24, 2014, dos Anjos faced off against former UFC and WEC lightweight champion Benson Henderson. Dos Anjos starched "Smooth" with a first-round KO. The resurgent Brazilian closed out 2014 with a bout against Nate Diaz and a dominant unanimous-decision win.

Three wins and two finishes and suddenly Nurmagomedov was in the rearview mirror. Not only that, but the soft-spoken contender had earned himself a world-title shot against Anthony "Showtime" Pettis.

"I'm not the kind of guy that promotes a lot," dos Anjos admits. "I just work hard and try to show who I am in the Octagon. I knew that my time would come one day.

I was just worried about training hard and improving my skills month by month, day by day. I think God made everything perfect, and I think it was at the right time. I think if it did happen before, it wouldn't have been so nice. God prepared my mind for this time."

The championship bout was set for March 14, 2015, in Dallas' American Airlines Center. Pettis was the favorite, but dos Anjos was confident. Then, just weeks away from fight night, disaster struck when the challenger tore his MCL. He had seen injuries remove his peers from title fights before in his division—most notably Josh Thomson and TJ Grant—and they never got that shot again. Dos Anjos was going to carry on and figure it out as he went.

"I had a bad injury three weeks before the fight on my MCL, and it was really hard for me to get into that fight, but I just knew I had something in my mind to go there," he said. "It's my time, I'm going to get this belt. I just knew that."

His strategy for the champion was simple yet profoundly effective: He was

going to move forward and never stop from minute one to minute 25.

"I don't like to watch film too much, but I watched Pettis maybe five times. Every time he hits the guy, the guy walks back," dos Anjos said. "They don't hit back. I think he never got hit by a guy like me. I thought, *When I put my hands on this guy, it's gonna change the fight.* And I think it did. I said to myself, 'Never walk back.' I was always going forward, putting pressure on him, and it was a perfect fight."

From the first punch dos Anjos landed, breaking Pettis' right orbital bone, the rout was on. Dos Anjos didn't take a backward step, and while Pettis was game, he could never figure out his opponent. At the end of five rounds, Bruce Buffer read off the verdict: 50-45 on all three judges' scorecards—and bellowed the words every challenger dreams of hearing—"and new..."—to the crowd.

Rafael dos Anjos was a world champion. And his time alone in the locker room was a lot different than it was 11 months earlier.

"I thought about all the hard work, about



at the Fan Expo I had one of the biggest lines, so it's really nice. It's good to be in this position."

Has the championship life been the way he pictured it so far?

"It's been happening the way that I thought, and I think this is just the beginning," dos Anjos said. "A lot of things changed in my life, but I'm still hungry to train. I know I still have a lot of things to do in this division, and nothing's changed in my head. I still want to train hard, and I still want to do a lot in this division."

He does not suffer from a shortage of work. From his likely next dance partner—and old rival—Cerrone, to Nurmagomedov, Pettis and a rising tide of young guns like Eddie Alvarez, Michael Johnson and Tony Ferguson, dos Anjos faces arguably the longest and most lethal waiting list of challengers in the UFC. He's not too concerned though, and neither is his head coach.

"Rafael is one of the toughest guys in my gym," Cordeiro said. "He develops his whole game every time he goes on the mats. We believe he can do a lot of good things. He's just 30 years old. When you lose one, people have doubts about your talent, but he proved when he beat Pettis and when he beat Henderson that he was coming. He said, 'I want to put my name there with the best in the world.' He believed that, his team believed that, and he made everything happen. I believe he's going to stay the champion for a long, long time. Rafael has amazing jiu-jitsu, now we can say he has amazing striking. He can beat all those guys from his division—100 percent."

As for the champion, he always deserves the last word, and he's got a message for the lightweight division.

"It was not easy to get here, and it will not be easy to take this away from me." ◉

when I first made my debut in the UFC and lost by knockout. All these things came into my head. Eighteen UFC fights. All the sacrifice. How God is great." He pauses. "It's the beginning of my legacy. I know I still have a lot of things to do."

BEFORE the UFC 189 mega card at the MGM Grand Garden Arena in Las Vegas, the UFC's International Fight Week featured several events, including the annual UFC Fan Expo. Rafael dos Anjos was there, no longer an anonymous contender, but a world champion. And he was treated accordingly by the legion of fans in town that week.

"It was really good to see how the hard work is paying off," he said. "The fans recognize me more now. At the signing

THE STRIKER

Rafael dos Anjos is a world-class Brazilian jiu-jitsu black belt. He's also become a deadly striker, as evidenced by his knockout of Benson Henderson and his five-round clinic against Anthony Pettis. Training with the likes of Rafael Cordeiro at Kings MMA is a key in this development, but the new lightweight champion also gives credit to the team at Evolve MMA in Singapore, saying, "Everything started when I went to Evolve, and I try to go there at least twice a year." But all the top-notch instruction doesn't matter if the

fighter isn't fully committed, and RDA is all-in when it comes to striking. "I need to be comfortable in the standup game, and I enjoy it more," he said. "Before, I was in my comfort zone, just training jiu-jitsu, some wrestling and some Muay Thai and boxing just to know how to close the distance and put the guy down. Now I have a different mentality. If the guy wants to fight standing, I would love to. I feel comfortable and like I've reached the top of my career because I feel good in all disciplines."

JOANNA

★★★★★

CHAMPION

JOANNA JEDRZEJCZYK

IN JUST ONE SHORT YEAR, **JOANNA JEDRZEJCZYK** WENT FROM
RELATIVE UNKNOWN TO SITTING ATOP THE STRAWWEIGHT DIVISION

JOANNA JEDRZEJCZYK

BY RYAN MCKINNELL
PHOTOGRAPHY BY JAMES LAW



IT

is an unfamiliar time for UFC strawweight champion Joanna Jedrzejczyk.

She has never been injured before, yet here she sits inside the MGM Grand with a freshly

constructed cast and accompanying steel pins inserted in her thumb. Her placid demeanor provides a counterpoint to the public relations demands and general chaos of International Fight Week attacking from all sides. After completing two consecutive days of autograph signings and meet and greets at the UFC Fan Expo, she seems, well, happy.

The champ rests in a plastic chair, one of her all-white Reeboks—the laces just loose enough—propped up on the seat next to her as she expounds on the path that led her to UFC gold.

It took only two fights in the UFC for Jedrzejczyk to rise to No. 1 contender status and a fight with reigning champ Carla Esparza. Jedrzejczyk admits that although she was happy “on the inside” when she defeated Esparza for the strawweight title, she didn’t feel happy on the outside. Perhaps on some level the path to gold was too short. Perhaps because she did not finish either of her previous UFC opponents. Or maybe it’s just the way of things—she can’t really be sure.

Since defending her belt three weeks ago against Jessica Penne in Berlin, she has been in constant movement. Over the past few days she has been in New York for the Reebok UFC Fight Kit unveiling, L.A. for her surgery, Vegas for UFC 189, then she’ll be off to San Diego for UFC Fight Night, Glasgow for Bisping versus Leites and—finally—home to Poland for a much-needed holiday.

“I need a vacation,” she says hesitantly. “I don’t like it [*laughs*], but I’m gonna take a break.” Growing up in Olsztyn, Poland, Jedrzejczyk had nature at her disposal. In a town with 11 lakes and flourishing forests, the child of Anna and Paul Jedrzejczyk had plenty of opportunity to use up her overflowing energy.

Jedrzejczyk is technically a middle child, sandwiched between her older sister, Ewa, and her younger (by 25 minutes) fraternal twin sister, Kasia. Joanna remains close to her sisters, despite taking a drastically divergent career path. Joanna’s current occupation serves as a stark contrast to Kasia’s job as an accountant. As a child, Kasia was always the studious one. Joanna, well,



she had a tendency to “copy” her studies. Joanna was loud and playful, whereas her twin was more reserved. “She’s kind of quiet,” recalls Jedrzejczyk, “so I was always trying to take things from her.”

The kids had a fairly normal upbringing in Olsztyn. Their parents owned a small local grocery, lived in the city and made sure the kids wanted for nothing and received a proper education. Growing up, she played typical sports: She was the point guard on her local basketball team and played volleyball. Early on, Jedrzejczyk thought she was going to be a photographer. She loved taking pictures of the world around her, and in the mid-2000s she even purchased

a rather expensive Nikon in the hopes of making a career out of her hobby.

But somewhere along the line the plans changed. She didn’t even know what the words *Muay Thai* meant when she took her first class. All she knew is that she truly enjoyed physical contact, saying, “I like to get hurt and give payback.”

She quickly excelled in her new love of fighting, and after six months, in 2006 she found herself at Warsaw Chopin Airport staring at a plane ticket. “I remember when I got my ticket to Thailand, and I was at the airport just looking at it like, *Oh, shit. I’m flying to Thailand. Like, really? It’s going to happen!*”

**"I ALWAYS WANT TO TAKE WOMEN'S
MMA EVEN HIGHER THAN IT IS NOW.
I WANT TO BE A LEGEND."**



It happened. And Jedrzejczyk embarked on a trip to the world championships in Thailand. She didn't win, but she made an impression and realized on that trip that she had what it took to continue her dream.

There were more than a few people still trying to detour her career path at this point, though. Before the trip to Thailand, Jedrzejczyk's father tried to lure her back to Poland. She had just passed her driving test, and her father offered her a new car and cash to stay home and focus on her studies in physical education.

"I was like, 'No, dad. I'm going.' They thought they could take me to the other side, but I was too focused.

"In the beginning they didn't like it. They thought I was going to have a different hobby and leave after a few months, but I didn't. I remember my first sparring—real sparring—with an audience: I came back to the corner with a tissue in my nose, and my father was like, 'No, no! You cannot do this.' But I could see he was proud of me."

Jedrzejczyk continued to fight and win on the international Muay Thai circuit. But to accelerate her progress and reach her championship goals she planned another trip to Thailand to train, this time for nearly two years. A side trip to Holland for a vacation before her deep dive into

her art and a chance meeting with K-1 kickboxing legend Ernesto Hoost, however, derailed her plans. Jedrzejczyk canceled the trip to Bangkok and set up camp with Team Hoost for two years.

"She already had confidence in her capabilities," recalls Hoost. "Since she was dedicated, it was very easy to train her. Because everything I would tell her, everything I would try to improve, she would take it and she would accept it."

"It doesn't surprise me she is performing so well right now. She is so dedicated and taking all punishment if necessary just to come back and fight." 🥊



**“I HAVE RESPECT
FOR EVERY FIGHTER
IN MY DIVISION AND
THE WHOLE SPORT,
BUT IT IS NOT GOING
TO BE EASY TO
BEAT ME.”**



Hoost, 50, is one of the greatest kickboxers to ever live. When “Mr. Perfect” speaks about toughness, dedication and physical abilities, you would be a fool not to listen. As a four-time K-1 champion, he has defeated some of the greatest kickboxers to ever step into a ring.

He saw in Joanna Jedrzejczyk the same thing everyone sees—an undying passion to compete and a desire to show everyone just how much of a “badass” she actually is.

“Although she is small, she is very tough—*very* tough,” he says. “She would spar with much heavier women, and sometimes men, and early on she would get beat up. She’d be in tears, but she’d just

say, ‘No, no, no, we continue. We continue.’ And she’d just come right back and try to beat the girls up. It was incredible how she moved and behaved in the training.”

Frustration is a reoccurring theme throughout Joanna Jedrzejczyk’s career. When things don’t go as easy as she’d like, she gets angry. That anger, however, fuels her. She admits to having a nasty competitive side, it’s a large part of what makes her so successful. It’s also what led her to professional mixed martial arts.

The frustration of not being able to showcase her talent is what brought the six-time World Muay Thai champ to MMA in the first place. After years dominating

the standup scene fighting around the globe in Japan, Suriname, Ukraine, Belarus and Turkey, it became harder and harder for her to find willing opponents.

She parted ways with Hoost. The cost of living was just too high in Holland, and the lack of fights was taking its toll on the young champion. Back in Poland after becoming a world champ, and with her talent going to waste, Jedrzejczyk fell into a funk. She was on the verge of quitting the fight game. Then, after years of encouragement from her trainers, Szymon Bonkowski and Pawel Derlacz, at her home gym, Arrachion Olsztyn, she finally took the headlong jump into full-time MMA training.

And guess what: She got frustrated.

“In the beginning I was kind of getting angry,” she recalls. “Because I like it when everything is going the right way. My opponents, they submitted me so many times. I didn’t like it.” Cauliflower ear placed a close second to the grappling’s steep learning curve, but it didn’t take very long for her to warm up to the idea of hitting people with four-ounce gloves. The gloves, she says, she enjoys “so very much.”

You see the product in the Octagon. Carla Esparza was a wrecking ball during her time on *The Ultimate Fighter: A Champion Will Be Crowned*. She became the inaugural strawweight champ with relative ease—thanks in large part to her supremely dominant wrestling. But she couldn’t touch Jedrzejczyk.

“I wasn’t sure how good she would be on the ground,” admits Hoost, who hasn’t trained with Jedrzejczyk in a couple of years, “but she has proven to be very good.

Basically she's a striker, but her takedown defense is surprisingly good."

She is a striker—and a wickedly good one at that. Her game echoes the style of Chuck "The Iceman" Liddell in his prime. She fights with an intensity that few in the strawweight division have matched at this point.

The girl from Olsztyn, Poland, is a rare breed of talent and pure, unadulterated violence. Although she makes repeated attempts to reiterate that, at the end of the day, it's all about competition.

Well, competition and showing everyone who the baddest woman on earth is.

"It's not about hurting people," she says. "I just want to show to everyone that you cannot [expletive] with me. I am the best. And I put in the work."

When pressed on why exactly she chose to become a fighter, she struggles with an answer. She is this weird mix of supreme confidence and endearing aloofness. She wants to tell you how great she is, but she really just wants to let her actions do all the talking.

"I remember when I was a little girl, there were always these older kids that were throwing bad words at the kids. So I was always kind of tough. I just told them, 'You can't do that shit to us!' And then, of course, I would run away, but I was young. So I think I was kind of tough in my head—confident."

It is her confidence that drives her. No more frustrations. No more worries about cauliflower ear or drowning when the fight goes to the mat. Now Joanna Jędrzejczyk is a two-sport world champion. Now she is the one making people frustrated.

"I know that I can get into the fight, and I can get beat up one day—it will probably happen. I don't know when, but I know that I'm gonna leave everything I have in the Octagon. It is the most important thing for me. People are excited about this fighter or that fighter, but I'm like, 'Hey, look at me. I'm going to show you what a real female MMA fighter is.' I have respect for every fighter in my division and the whole sport, but it is not going to be easy to beat me. I have talent. God says we cannot hide our talents, we must show our talent and practice. That is what I do. Someday I'm going to lose my fight. But I always want to put on a show and take women's MMA even higher than it is now. I want to be a legend."

She was a champ less than one year after her UFC debut—and after only three fights.

If you missed any part of 2015, there's a chance you missed Joanna Jędrzejczyk. But let's be honest: You didn't and you didn't.

If "legend" is a title Jędrzejczyk is looking to hold, she is well on her way. ○

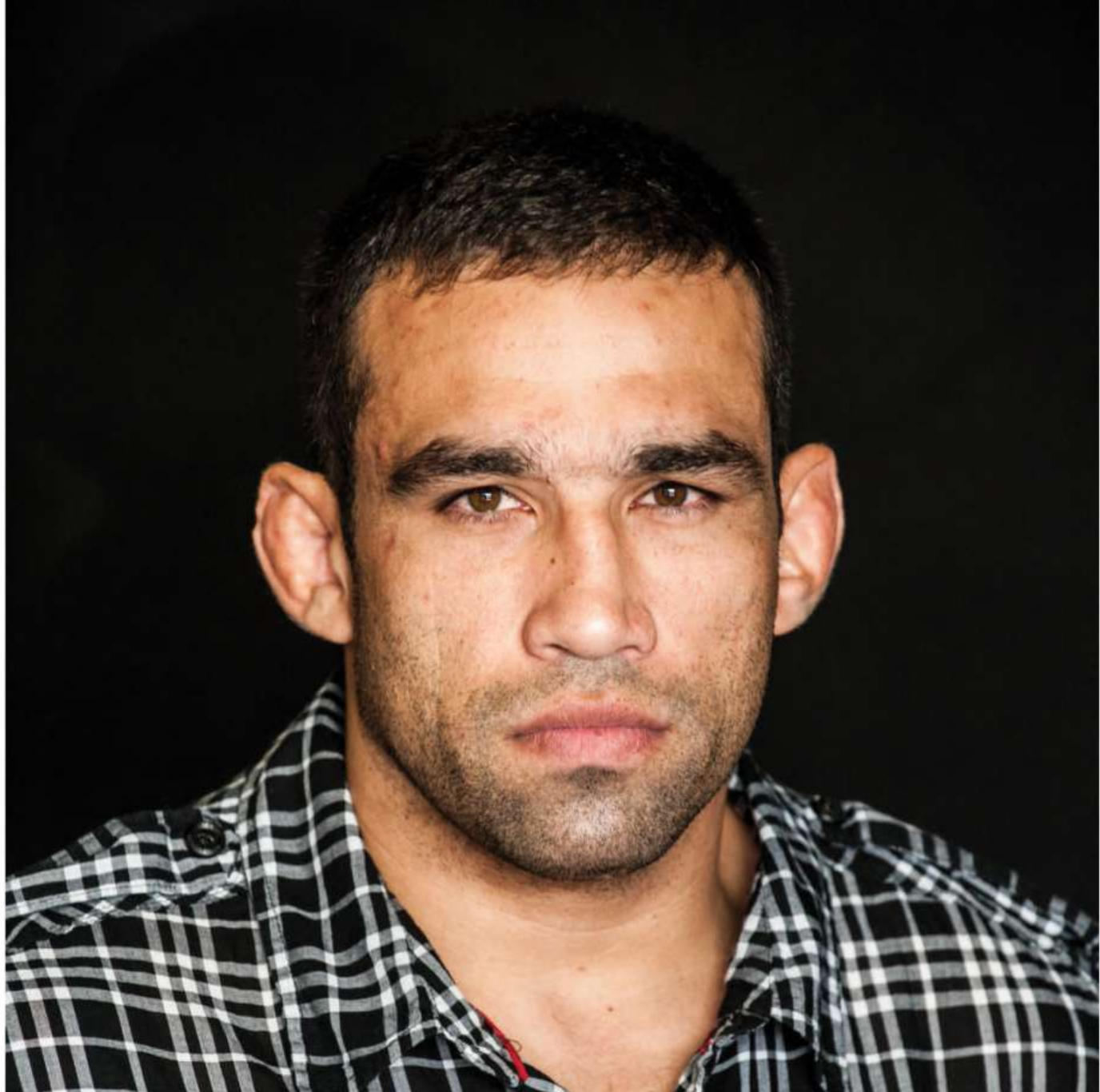


UN- DIS- PUTED

WHEN **FABRICIO WERDUM** UNITED THE UFC HEAVYWEIGHT TITLE, IT CAPPED OFF A 9-1 RUN THAT INCLUDED WINS OVER THE OLD GUARD AND THE NEW—FROM FEDOR EMELIANENKO AND MARK HUNT TO TRAVIS BROWNE AND CAIN VELASQUEZ. NOW THE UNDISPUTED CHAMPION HAS HIS SIGHTS SET ON BECOMING THE GREATEST OF ALL TIME.

BY THOMAS GERBASI





When Frank Bruno walked to the ring for his rematch with Mike Tyson in 1996, it was said that the visibly rattled Brit made the sign of the cross more times than the Pope at Sunday mass. “Iron Mike” stopped him in the third.

Nineteen years later, Fabricio Werdum walked into the Octagon in Mexico City to face the baddest man on the planet, UFC heavyweight champion Cain Velasquez, and he was smiling the entire way. The look on his face seemed more in line with a walk on the beach with his wife, Karine, and their daughters Joanna and Julia, not a man heading into a five-round, 25-minute prizefight with an opponent some were

calling the best heavyweight ever. Werdum won his fight in the third round, submitting Velasquez via guillotine choke, to become the undisputed UFC heavyweight champion. Sometimes it's all about your state of mind.

“Fighters have different ways of showing their emotions,” said Werdum’s longtime head coach Rafael Cordeiro. “Fabricio shows his emotion with a smile on his face. Sometimes in a tough situation, the best thing to do is smile. It changes everything—it changes the atmosphere. This is the big secret for Fabricio. He feels comfortable because he trains hard all the time. He’s always happy.”

It wasn’t always that way for the 38-year-old native of Porto Alegre, Brazil. For years he seemed to be burdened by expectations,

destined for championships in PRIDE and the UFC that he never won. But when he was upset by then-unknown Junior Dos Santos in October of 2008, all those expectations disappeared, along with his spot on the UFC roster. He was a world-class talent who demanded a world-class paycheck, but no one wanted to give it to him. “I was living here in the U.S., and it was very hard to get this contract with Strikeforce because I wasn’t very well known, so no one wanted me as a fighter,” Werdum said before the Velasquez fight. “They didn’t want to hire me or pay me what I deserved. So I talked to Rafael Cordeiro and said, ‘Look, I’m going to accept whatever they want to pay me, which is very little, but I’m sure I will get where I want to be.’ And that’s what happened.”



“WHEN I FOUGHT CAIN IT FELT LIKE MY FIRST TITLE DEFENSE.”

Eventually, he signed with Strikeforce and parlayed a 3-1 run there that included victories over Mike Kyle, Antonio “Bigfoot” Silva and a submission win over Fedor Emelianenko into another shot with the UFC in 2012. He hasn’t stopped smiling since.

“I have a great head coach in Rafael Cordeiro, who pushes me to the limit in the gym,” Werdum said when asked the secret to his happiness during his second run in the Octagon. “My fight is in the gym. When I get to the Octagon I am just having fun and enjoying what I do. Being relaxed is a big part of my success.”

Few coaches in MMA are better equipped to prepare a fighter than Cordeiro, the former coach of the legendary Chute Boxe Academy in Curitiba and currently the main man at Kings MMA in Huntington Beach, California. Cordeiro doesn’t train his athletes for a sporting

competition; he trains them to fight.

“The guys go to kill or die,” the Muay Thai master said. “More than throwing punches and kicks, I work my fighters’ mental game for the fight. When the guys go there, they’re prepared for a war.”

The difference in Werdum from 2008 to 2012 was night and day. Before, he was a jiu-jitsu ace with a tentative standup game. Now he was willing to strike first and look for a submission later. Roy Nelson, Mike Russow, Minotaur Nogueira and Travis Browne all tasted defeat at the hands of “Vai Cavalo” en route to his shot at Velasquez’ heavyweight crown.

Following a stint coaching against Velasquez on the first season of *The Ultimate Fighter Latin America*, that shot was scheduled for the UFC’s first visit to Mexico on November 15, 2014. Werdum, fluent in Spanish from years spent in Spain, became a hit with the Mexican people as he

set up training camp near Mexico City to acclimate to the high altitude.

Then his dream fight evaporated when Velasquez blew out his knee in training. Werdum remained on the card, but his opponent would now be late replacement Mark Hunt. The good news was that an interim heavyweight championship was on the line, and after a rough start against “The Super Samoan,” the Brazilian stopped Hunt in the second round with strikes.

Werdum celebrated, even if many observers questioned the validity of his claim to the championship. There was no such second-guessing from the side of the Brazilian.

“I felt that I was the champion after beating Hunt,” he said. “When I fought Cain it felt like my first title defense. The fight with Cain validated me as the true champion.” 🥊



**“MY FIGHT IS IN THE GYM.
WHEN I GET TO THE OCTAGON
I AM JUST HAVING FUN AND
ENJOYING WHAT I DO.”**

The Velasquez fight, scheduled for June 13, 2015, and again in Mexico City, carried the extra freight of a heavyweight title-unification bout. And again Werdum left his adopted home of Los Angeles to stay in Mexico City and complete his training camp at altitude. “I think you have to make sacrifices in life to get the rewards,” Werdum said. “Me going to Mexico early, being away from my family and investing a lot of money in my training camp was a sacrifice that paid off. My team also sacrificed a lot to help me, but I knew I was doing the right thing.”

Velasquez didn’t take that precaution. And while some would say that the postponement of the fight benefitted Werdum—who not only had more time to study his foe, but who also got to experience fighting in Mexico City firsthand—he says it didn’t matter when or where it took place, because he was always going to win.

“It doesn’t matter when the fight happens,” he said. “My mindset is to always come prepared physically and mentally. This fight could have happened on a different planet and the result would have

been the same because I am always ready.”

He certainly was on the night of June 13. In control from the moment the Octagon door shut and the UFC’s two best heavyweights were waved into battle, Werdum was never in trouble against Velasquez, eventually turning a takedown attempt from the champion into a fight-ending submission. “After winning the belt I couldn’t describe my feelings,” he said. “I went on vacation and enjoyed my victory with my family. I believe that when I beat Mark Hunt I was the champion because I carried the division for two years. Fighting Cain was special because everyone knew that he was the best heavyweight in UFC history. I beat him, and now I am the UFC champion.”

Like any great story, the ultimate victory is never achieved without overcoming some roadblocks. Before the Velasquez fight, Werdum reflected on the good old days that weren’t necessarily good, and he pointed the finger right at the man in the mirror.

“The first time I came to the UFC, I didn’t like it much,” he admitted. “At first, I did it because I was making a lot of money, but I didn’t like it because I

wasn't a professional. I didn't resemble a professional at that time. I wasn't focused, and I didn't want to be a champion. So I was making money, but I was going in the direction I wasn't supposed to go. Fighters need to go in a direction to do the right thing," Werdum continued. "Have a family, stay focused, be a professional. And when I first came to the UFC, I was not a professional. And that's why I lost the fourth fight I had against Dos Santos. He knocked me out. I had never been knocked out in my life. I think that was the best thing that could've ever happened to me, so I could learn what I wanted. And when I lost that fight, I decided that I wanted to be a professional. That's been the best decision I ever made."

Seven years after the Dos Santos fight, the two countrymen are in different places in their careers. Werdum stands atop the UFC heavyweight division, and "Cigano" lies in wait for another crack at the belt he himself once held. Werdum has no trouble waiting, but at the same time, he's not exactly screaming for redemption. In his eyes, that loss made him who he is today, and if he gets another bout with Dos Santos, great. If not, he's already moved on.

"Dos Santos is a great fighter, but I feel I have evolved a lot since our fight," Werdum said. "If we fight again, there will be a different result."

A rematch between the two rivals would be an epic battle, especially if hosted in Brazil, but there is no shortage of suitors for the man at the top of the heavyweight division. Stipe Miocic and Andrei Arlovski have both made a case for a world title shot, and Werdum, who is currently healing up some lingering injuries, has said he has no problem fighting either contender. Then there's Velasquez, who is chomping at the bit to return to the Octagon as soon as possible in order to fight, win and get back in line. Werdum embraces it, and when it comes to future motivation, he still has the hunger of a challenger in his heart.

"I'm the champ," he said. "I will fight whoever the UFC wants me to fight. As long as it makes sense for everybody, I am game. And I am hungrier than ever. I want to defend my belt many more times."

If he does, there will be no question that Fabricio Werdum, the heavyweight once cut from the UFC roster, is the best big man to ever grace the sport. But has he already earned that status with wins over Velasquez, Nogueira and Emelianenko, three men generally considered to be the gold standard for heavyweight mixed martial artists? It's a loaded question, but Werdum has no problem answering it.

"I believe that if you beat the best you are the best," he said. "They are all great fighters and champions, but my hand was raised when we fought."



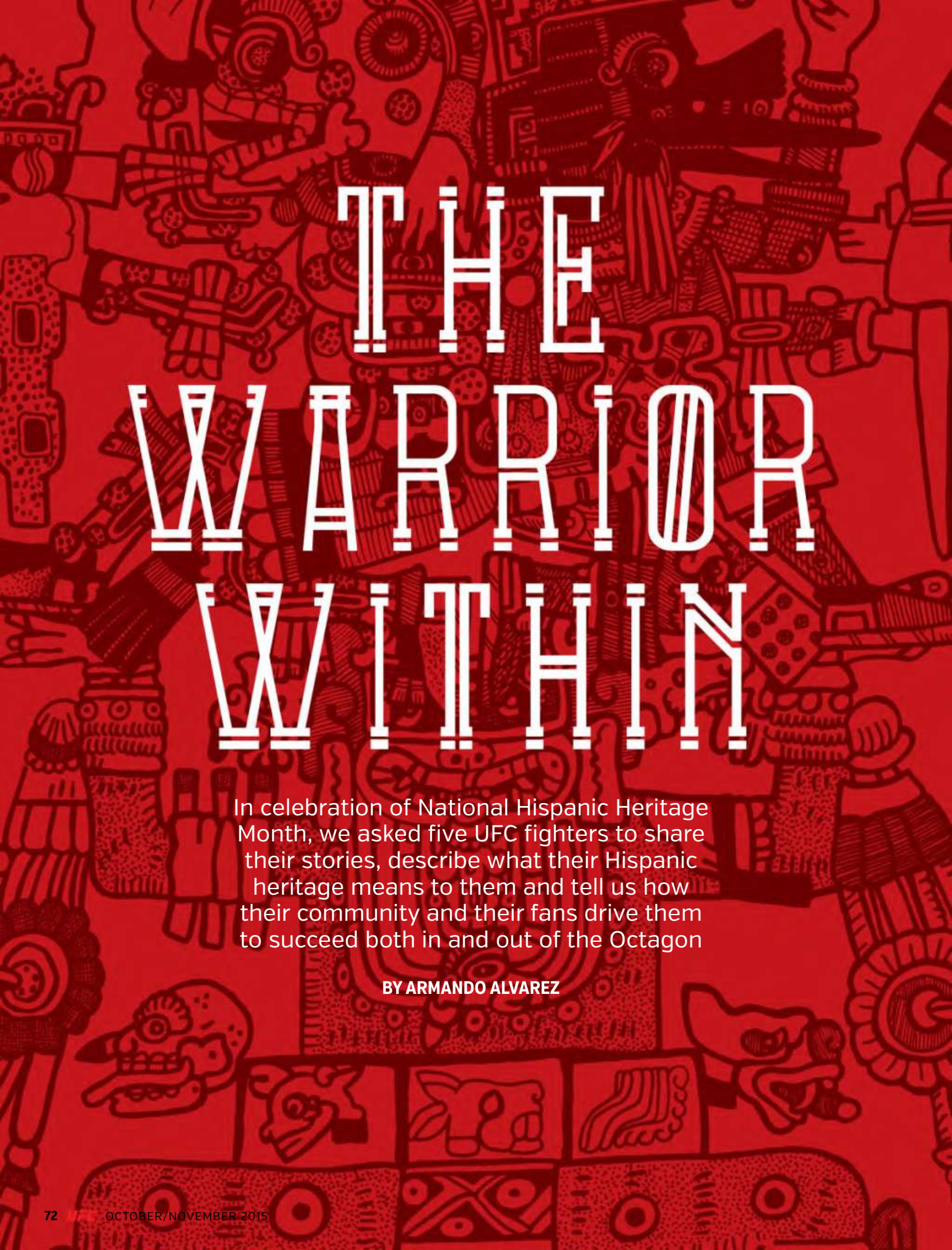
Cordeiro is a little (OK, a lot) more direct, with all due respect to the men his fighter beat, of course.

"I don't want to be arrogant, but I believe Fabricio is the best of all time," he said. "He beat all those legends, and for me he *became* a legend after that. I believe Fabricio is the GOAT."

The Octagon will put Cordeiro's theory to the ultimate test. Until that time comes later this year, Werdum will continue to build on his current momentum. "I always have a positive energy," he said. "And with sacrifices, hard work and dedication, I'm going to be the champ for a long time." ○

THE ARCHITECT

For more than seven years, Werdum and Cordeiro have had an unbreakable bond in and out of the gym. Cordeiro's no-nonsense coaching philosophy, born in the heat of Curitiba's iconic Chute Boxe gym, is a simple but effective one. "We train hard, and my immediate goal is to motivate my fighters all the time," he said. "I keep my guys motivated, and I make each fight a fight for the belt." But there's more, and it's why Kings MMA has produced two world champions (Werdum and lightweight boss Rafael dos Anjos) and several up-and-comers like Beneil Dariush. "I believe our connection as friends makes a lot of difference inside the Octagon," Cordeiro said. "Sometimes what we talk about on the mat is what the guys bring inside the Octagon. Sometimes one little word makes a lot of difference in the fight."



THE WARRIOR WITHIN

In celebration of National Hispanic Heritage Month, we asked five UFC fighters to share their stories, describe what their Hispanic heritage means to them and tell us how their community and their fans drive them to succeed both in and out of the Octagon

BY ARMANDO ALVAREZ

HENRY “THE MESSENGER” CEJUDO

Ask him about his nickname and Henry Cejudo will tell you, “My message is of hope, faith and love. It’s about educating people to get up and march forward.” March forward is exactly what Nelly Rico, Henry’s mother, did throughout her life. Rico, a Mexican immigrant from Mexico City, crossed the border with her siblings. Once they set foot on U.S. soil, all she ever did was work hard and sacrifice, something that has resonated in Cejudo along his journey.

“She is an inspiration for me. To cross the border, and then work 15- and 16-hour days in the fields is not easy. I have an attitude of no excuses because of her,” Cejudo said. “She didn’t speak a lick of English. She would get home from working two jobs looking beat-up and would still pick herself up and cook us dinner. As a kid, it wasn’t easy to see her suffer from such hard labor. It motivates me to be better in life, and I’ve applied it to the sport of MMA.”

That same motivation powered Cejudo to a gold medal in freestyle wrestling at the 2008 Olympic Games. Despite becoming the youngest U.S. wrestler to earn Olympic gold, Cejudo knows something was missing while he stood on the podium in Beijing. “My mother wasn’t able to go to the games to watch me compete because of her immigration status,” Cejudo recalled. “That’s life, though. I’m not going to sit here and cry about it, and neither did she. My mom watched on TV and enjoyed every moment of it. It was the best she could do. Two years later, there she was passing her citizenship test. She worked so hard to get that.” His mother’s story is like the story of many Hispanics that come to this country. He thanks the United States for giving immigrants like his mother the opportunity to give a better life to their families.

“We survived,” Cejudo said. “This country is a place where—if you work hard—you can be the best at anything you do.” Being the best is something of a habit for Cejudo. He continues to climb up the UFC



flyweight ranks and hopes to continue being a pioneer for Latinos and become a world champion. All around him he sees the ascent of other Hispanic fighters, and it’s something that makes him proud, especially as a Mexican-American.

On June 13, Cejudo was able to fight in his parents’ hometown of Mexico

City at UFC 188. “It was electric,” Cejudo said. “I’ve fought in sold-out arenas in Phoenix and Dallas, but the energy was different in Mexico. It’s like going back to a time where the ancient Central and South American civilizations fought to the death. That fighting spirit, that blood, still exists in Mexican-American fighters like myself.” 🇲🇽

TECIA "THE TINY TORNADO" TORRES

Born to a Puerto Rican father and Portuguese mother, undefeated strawweight contender Tecia Torres didn't grow up idolizing boxers like Puerto Rico's Felix Trinidad or Miguel Cotto. "If it wasn't for the fact that I'm a fighter I wouldn't watch much sports," says Torres. "But I do watch Cotto when he fights." Instead, Torres looks up to one of the island's most famous daughters by way of the Bronx: Jennifer Lopez. "She's Jenny from the block! I love her music and her movies. And she goes back to where she grew up in the Bronx and gives back to the community," Torres said.

"It's great to have a role model like her. I want to be like her, that role model that little girls can look up to. I'm straight edge. I've never touched a drug, and I want to show kids that you can accomplish big things the right way."

According to Torres, her career is about more than racking up wins and fighting for the UFC title, it's about leveraging her experience to reach out to her community. "For me it's a dream come true to witness these young Latinas going to the gyms," Torres said. "I can't wait to see them when they grow up, because they're going to surpass all of us tenfold. I grew up doing karate, but these girls are learning MMA from the start. They're also growing up never having to hear the words *you can't do it*. To be a part of this makes me very, very proud."



PHOTO: TODD LUSSIER/ZUFFA, LLC VIA GETTY IMAGES

RICARDO "THE BULLY" LAMAS



PHOTO: MIKE ROACH/ZUFFA, LLC VIA GETTY IMAGES

When he steps into the Octagon, featherweight contender Ricardo Lamas never ceases to display his heart, determination and warrior mentality. Born and raised in Chicago, Lamas attributes his fighting style to his Hispanic heritage.

"My mom is Mexican and my dad is Cuban, so I take a little bit from both

of them," Lamas said. "Mexicans love boxing and fighting in general. Cubans have that revolution mentality inside of them because of how much they've gone through. I have fighting in my blood because of them, and it helps drive me really far in this sport.

"I love that I was born in the United States. If it wasn't for this country I wouldn't be here today, but the blood

that runs through my veins is Mexican and Cuban blood," Lamas said. "I was brought up with my parent's cultural values, and it shows on the big stage. We are warriors."

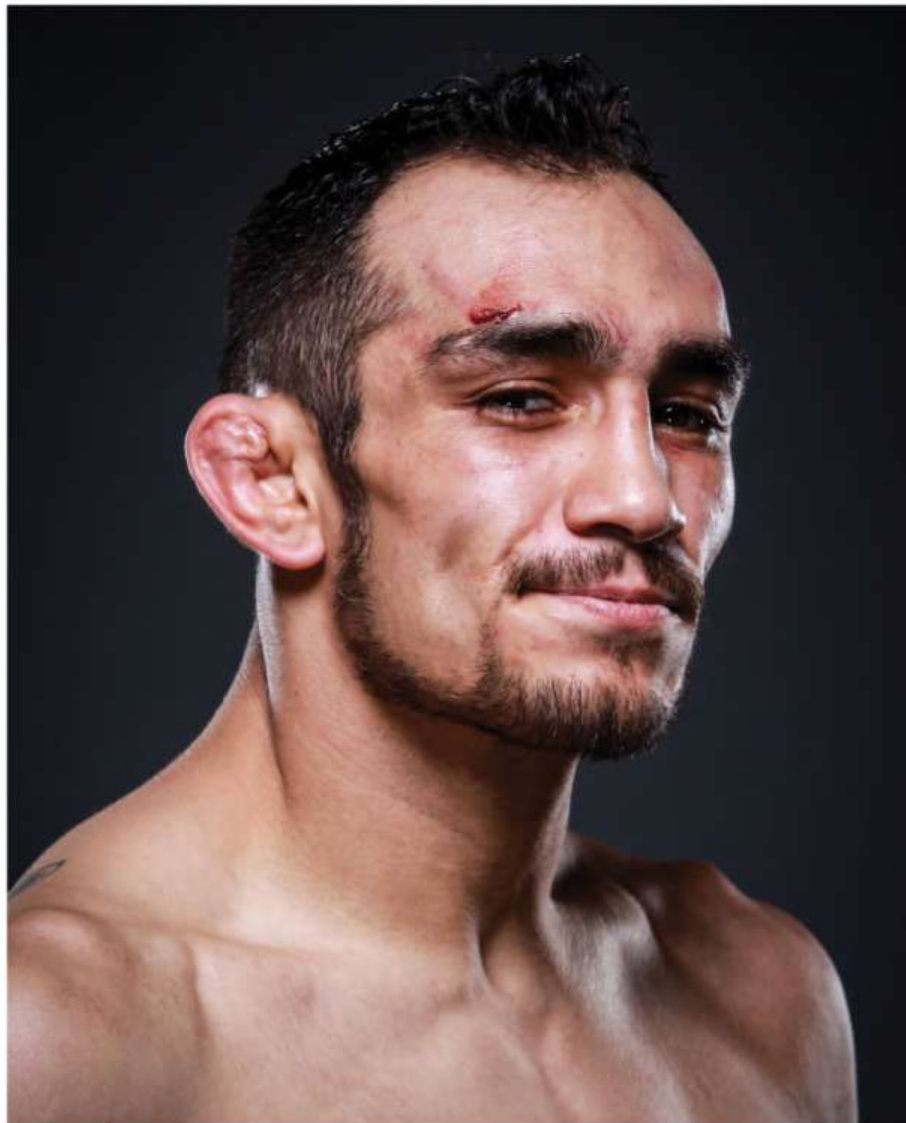
For Ricardo, no one epitomizes the word *warrior* more than his father, Jose Lamas. As a young man Jose joined Fidel Castro and his rebels in the Sierra Maestra mountain range with the goal of ousting dictator Fulgencio Batista from Cuba. It was not long before Jose realized Castro was more of the same, or even worse than Batista, and the Lamas family history turned from revolution to survival.

"My father went underground and became president of the National Student Sector Movement. He was very vocal against the Castro regime, organizing and handing out pamphlets to let people know how many everyday Cubans were being locked up as political prisoners. He really put his life on the line for the sake of his country."

With the regime in hot pursuit, he found refuge in the Brazilian Embassy in Cuba and remained there six months until he was able to take a plane and escape his home forever. "If he had been caught he would've been sent to the firing squad," Lamas said. "Some of his friends weren't as lucky, and that still weighs heavily on his mind. That journey drove him to do everything in his power to be successful in the United States. He's still active with the Cuban exile movement and spreads awareness to keep the memory of his fallen brothers alive."

Ricardo readily shares the story of his father's plight, even though it's not an easy tale to tell. The younger Lamas attributes much of his success in and out of the Octagon to the lessons learned from Jose. "I'm so grateful to have a father like him," Lamas says proudly. "He's the most courageous man I've ever known. He stands up for what he believes in. He never backs down. He's not afraid of anyone. He definitely passed that down to me." 🇨🇺

TONY "EL CUCUY" FERGUSON



UFC lightweight contender Tony Ferguson came by the nickname "El Cucuy," the Mexican version of the boogeyman, the old-fashioned way. A buddy in the gym pinned it on him and it stuck. "I was in the gym, and one of my old trainers saw my ears, my arms and the look on my face and said, 'You're scary. You're *El Cucuy*!'" Ferguson recalls. "When I train, when I fight, I'm really intense. I'm scary when I'm

inside the Octagon. It's like another persona I have. Everyone is scared of the boogeyman."

Ferguson was born to Mexican parents, but took his stepdad's last name, so not a lot of people know of his Hispanic background. But like every kid growing up in the culture, he, too, came face to face with "El Cucuy," and he credits him with making him the fighter he is today.

"One time my uncle locked me in the garage and told me El Cucuy was going to get me," Ferguson said. "I was scared, but I faced my fears—and, believe it or not, it helps me to face my fears inside the Octagon. I train like El Cucuy because you can't be scared of anyone in there—even if you're facing a monster, a beast. It's a different type of mentality in there. 'El Cucuy' is not afraid of anyone."

Although Ferguson cherishes being "El Cucuy" in the Octagon, outside of it he enjoys giving back to the community. He likes to volunteer his time, work with kids and share his ideas on how to live your life, work hard and do it humbly.

"When I was young I used to hang out at clubs and waste my money on stupid things," Ferguson said. "One day I realized what I wanted from life, and it didn't include any of that. It's important for me to be a role model in the position I'm in. People are watching you at all times, so it's important not to be cocky and to be humble and appreciate what got you there. I like to spread that message to kids in mom-and-pop spots where they don't exactly have the resources some of the bigger places do. I give these kids my phone number or my e-mail address and tell them to contact me if they have questions. They actually do, and I love answering them. I like to pay it forward."

Ferguson embraced the mantle of "El Cucuy." Not only is it a part of Ferguson's culture, it defines the long days and nights in the gym, the part of him he leaves inside the Octagon every time he fights. He's earned the name "El Cucuy," and it serves as a testament to his hard work. And that's what he wants his fellow Mexican fans to see the next time they witness one of his bouts.

"I fight with all my heart, with all my soul, with all my brain. I lay everything on the line," Ferguson said. "I want to get to the top of my division and carry that Mexican flag. Look out for 'El Cucuy.'"

JULIANNA “THE VENEZUELAN VIXEN” PEÑA

In November of 2013, Julianna Peña announced her arrival in the UFC when she pounded out Jessica Rakoczy to complete her sweep of the 18th season of *The Ultimate Fighter*. The 25-year-old from Spokane, Washington, thinks the Venezuelan and Mexican blood flowing through her veins and her Hispanic heritage are at least part of her recipe for success in her chosen profession.

“I’m a bit of a firecracker,” Peña says. “Fighting has always been part of my life and my culture. I would fight with my siblings and cousins. It was like a telenovela in my house growing up. Everyone was so dramatic and loud and had so much passion.”

Peña picked up a love of boxing from her maternal grandfather, Angel Alvarado. He was always a fan of Oscar de la Hoya, and “he has always been a big advocate for boxing. I always remember supporting Oscar de la Hoya and the Mexican boxers. We still watch the fights. We’re both fans of ‘Canelo’ Alvarez.”

From her parents Hernando and Pamela Peña, Julianna inherited a passion for life and a work ethic to match. “They always wanted me to be successful in my career, and I have been because of that fire within me,” Peña said. “I have that fire because they have that fire.” She says her parents, who have stuck together for 37 years, have become her biggest supporters—especially her dad. Although it took some time for Hernando to adjust to his daughter’s choice of career.

“I’m the baby of four, so he wasn’t thrilled that I wanted to fight because he didn’t want me getting hit,” Peña said. “I had to fight with him for a year to accept that this was what I wanted to do. He finally came around when I won *The Ultimate Fighter*. He’s a big fan now.”

Now a new generation of young MMA fans will get a chance to find the sport the same way Julianna found boxing. And making an authentic connection with fans who share her heritage is important to Julianna. “I understand Spanish, and speak Spanish, but not as well as I would



like,” Peña says. “I’m working on speaking it more fluently. To me it’s very important to be able to communicate with my Latin American fan base without any problems.

“I want to fight for everyone representing the Hispanic community,” Peña said. “They make me want to

fight with all my heart and give 100 percent every single time I step in the Octagon. Like most Latinos I have heart, and that’s what makes me a great fighter—that will to win and to survive no matter what position I’m in.” ○



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THE HIT LIST

Strike with power, explosiveness and ferocity with the help of these three high-impact workouts

By MICHAEL BERG, NSCA-CPT Photography by JAMES LAW



Whether you want to power up your standup game or just shake up your current fitness program, training in the various striking disciplines delivers an incredible workout, with benefits that range from increased power and flexibility to fat loss and stress relief. To get you started we've tapped three top martial arts experts from UFC GYM: Rob McCullough, senior director of MMA programming, and trainer/coaches PJ Shirdan and Marie "AK" Choi. Each has designed their own unique workout to help MMA athletes, boxers, Muay Thai practitioners or anyone ramp up his or her punching prowess.

It's a pursuit that involves not just arm and upper-body improvements, but whole-body foundational and rotational power, stamina and explosiveness—as you'll see from the torrid mix of intense exercises included.

THE MMA STRIKING WORKOUT

DESIGNED BY ROB McCULLOUGH, UFC GYM'S SENIOR DIRECTOR OF MMA PROGRAMMING

"MMA striking is essential for athletes competing in a setting where the rules allow submissions, grappling and takedowns," says former WEC lightweight champion and IMTC welterweight Muay Thai kickboxing champion "Razor" Rob McCullough.

"The stance for MMA striking is not the same as any other striking art, since having a lower center of gravity to defend takedowns is essential when competing. Head, hands and sprawling—hips to the floor, head up—is key to defending the legs of an attacking opponent trying to execute takedowns when standing."

This "sprawl and brawl" workout is heavy on building a solid punch with strength on and off your feet.



SHADOWBOXING



SHADOWBOXING

THE MMA STRIKING WORKOUT

Start and finish the workout with five minutes of SMR foam rolling, working your way up your body from your lower legs to your thighs to your hips and glutes, then along the spine and to your lats and shoulders. At the end of the workout, also perform a series of neck exercises (50 "yes" nods, 50 "no" nods, 50 circles to the left and 50 circles to the right—performed once lying on your back and again lying on your stomach), and complete the session with static stretches for the legs, torso and arms.

DYNAMIC STRETCH CIRCUIT (5 MINUTES)

Walking Kicks
Walking Hip Flexor Stretch (Arms Up)
Walkout to Push-Up (Inchworm Legs)
Bear Crawl Forward, Backward, Side to Side

JUMP ROPE (5 MINUTES)

Both Feet (60 seconds)
One Foot (30 seconds each leg)
High Knees (30 seconds)
Jumping Side to Side (30 seconds)
Double Unders (60 seconds)
Crossing the Rope (60 seconds)

SPEED AGILITY QUICKNESS (SAQ)

Speed Ladder Pattern (5 minutes)
Perform speed ladder patterns for the time allotment, with minimal rest.

Shadowboxing With Sprawls (5 minutes)
Shadowbox wearing a weight vest and holding one-pound dumbbells.

STRENGTH TRAINING ROUND 1 (5 MINUTES)

Do each of the following exercises for one minute:
Turkish Get-Up (with a 50-pound dumbbell, right side only)
Push-Up Row (with a 50-pound dumbbell)
Jumping Jack/Push-Up/Mountain Climber
Scorpion Twist
Hand Release Push-Ups

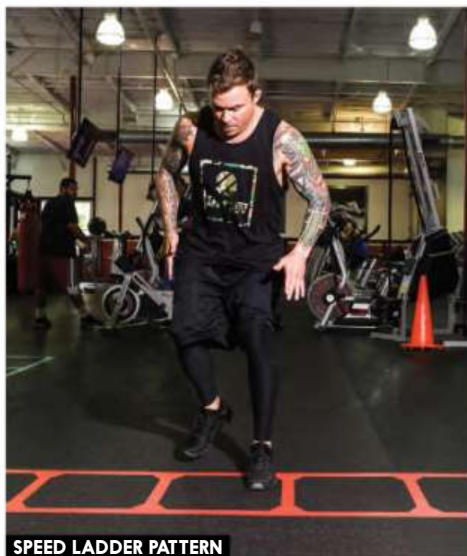


ROB McCULLOUGH

THE MMA STRIKING WORKOUT **CONT**



SCORPION TWIST



SPEED LADDER PATTERN

BEAR CRAWL

Get down on all fours in "tabletop" position, hands under shoulders and knees under hips. Crawl forward on the floor by moving your right hand and left foot forward, keeping your knees an inch or so off the floor the whole time while up on your toes. Then quickly follow suit with the left hand and right foot, all the while keeping your core tight and spine in alignment from head to tailbone. Crawl 50 feet forward, then reverse to return to the starting point. Next, crawl in similar fashion to the left and the right to complete the pattern in all four directions.

SPEED LADDER PATTERN

Place a training ladder on the floor and stand in front of it. Start quickly moving your feet in and out of the ladder in combinations –in, out and side to side—for the allotted five minutes.

SCORPION TWIST

Lie prone on the floor with your feet together and arms extended out to your sides, forearms down and chest in contact with the floor. Lift your left knee and hip, twisting so that your left foot comes all the way over

STRENGTH TRAINING ROUND 2 (5 MINUTES)

Do each of the following exercises for one minute:
Turkish Get-Up (with a 50-pound dumbbell, left side only)
Shadowbox With Sprawls and Jumping Knees
Break Fall Technical Stand Knees/Elbows
Pull-Up (bring knees up to elbows on each rep)
Medicine-Ball Twists

STRENGTH TRAINING ROUND 3 (4 MINUTES)

Do each of the following exercises for one minute:
Lunge Forward, Backward and Side to Side
Bridge to Sit-Up
Windshield Wipers (lying on your back)
Fast Feet to Sprawls

POWER ROUND (5 MINUTES)

Repeat this sequence twice with a 30-second rest in between. Do each exercise for 30 seconds:
TRX Lateral Single-Leg Jump-Squat
Medicine-Ball Partner Toss From Knees to Sprawl
TRX Burpee With Spiderman Push-Up (both sides)
Sledgehammer Tire Smash With Sprawl



BEAR CRAWL

and touches the floor outside of your right leg, without lifting your upper body from the floor. After holding the stretch for a count, return to the start. Alternate between legs for one minute.

TURKISH GET-UP

Lie on the floor with your legs extended and press a single dumbbell to full elbow lockout with your right arm. Holding it there, bend your right knee and slide your right foot toward your right hip. Using your left hand and right foot as a support, "roll" toward your left side until your torso is upright. From here, lift your hips off the ground by supporting yourself on your left hand and right foot. While your hips are elevated, slide your left knee underneath your body and straighten up. You should now look as if you are in the bottom of a lunge position while holding the dumbbell in your right arm fully extended overhead. Now simply stand up. To return to the start, reverse the steps until you are flat on the floor and switch the weight to your left hand to repeat the sequence.



TURKISH GET-UP



BREAK FALL TECHNICAL STAND KNEES/ELBOWS



TRX LATERAL JUMP SQUAT



BRIDGE TO SIT-UP

BREAK FALL TECHNICAL STAND KNEES/ELBOWS

Start with a forward roll into a break fall, landing on your back cleanly while slapping your arms to the mat. Immediately return to a standing position and deliver a quick series of knees and elbows. Repeat the sequence for one minute.

BRIDGE TO SIT-UP

Start in bridge position—feet planted with legs together, knees bent to 90 degrees, hips elevated so only your head and shoulders are in contact with the floor. Your arms should be straight and in contact with the floor. Lower your hips slowly to the floor, then bring your hands up and place them loosely behind your head to perform a full sit-up. After, return to the bridge and repeat.

TRX LATERAL JUMPING SQUAT

Grasp a TRX handle in each hand and lean away from the anchor point. Your body should be straight from head to heels. From here, jump to the left and land on your left leg, immediately going down into a squat while keeping your right leg elevated off the floor. Explosively extend your hip and knee to leap up and to the right, now landing only on your right leg and descending into a squat. Continue the pattern for 30 seconds.

THE PUNCHING POWER BOXING WORKOUT

DESIGNED BY PJ SHIRDAN, BOXING COACH/
TRAINER/ CONDITIONING COACH AT UFC GYM,
PHILADELPHIA

"I bring a different type of training to UFC GYM," says PJ Shirdan, an NASM [CPT], NASM [MMACS] and TRX Certified Personal Trainer and coach who was an amateur All-American boxer in the 185-pound division.

Indeed, in learning from some of the great coaches of the game, including Freddie Roach at Wild Card in California, Fred Jenkins at ABC Rec in Philadelphia and Raul "Chino" Rivas at Victory Boxing in New Jersey, among others—as well as stepping into the ring to spar with a few heavyweight title contenders in his day—Shirdan now passes his array of striking knowledge to his clients, a list that includes beginners and professional athletes alike.

The following workout is stripped down to the simplest elements, organized into "rounds" of activity designed to integrate both the instantaneous and longer-range energy systems of the body while enhancing power under increasing fatigue.



PJ SHIRDAN

PUNCHING-POWER BOXING WORKOUT

Start the workout with a 10- to 20-minute warm-up consisting of SMR foam rolling (three to five minutes), shadowboxing (three to five minutes) and jump rope (one to five three-minute rounds with 20 seconds of rest in between, or one continuous round if you can manage it). "Give the workout all you have, and repeat the strength and power portions two to three times if you really want to ramp it up and train differently," Shirdan says.

STRENGTH TRAINING (ABOUT 20 MINUTES TOTAL)

Do three sets of each round: Perform each listed exercise for 30 seconds, and then rest 30 seconds between each two-minute round.

ROUND 1:

Mountain Climber
Burpee With Jab Cross
Jumping Jacks
Russian Twist

ROUND 2:

Squat Thrust
Plyo Push-Up
High Knees in Place
Plank on Elbows

ROUND 3:

Squat Jump
Lunge Jump
Jumping Jack Squat
Crunch

POWER TRAINING (ABOUT 10 MINUTES TOTAL)

Superset battle ropes and shadowboxing for seven to 10 rounds, doing each activity for 30 to 60 seconds at a time. For shadowboxing, hold one- to five-pound weights.



RUSSIAN TWIST



HIGH KNEES IN PLACE

RUSSIAN TWIST

Balance on your glutes on the floor with your heels about an inch off the floor and your knees bent. Put your hands together in front of your core. First, twist your torso and bring your hands to the right as far as you can, then slowly twist all the way back to the left. (For added resistance, you can hold a weight plate during this move.)

SQUAT THRUST

Stand upright with your feet shoulder-width apart. Start by squatting down as you put your hands out in front of you, then kick your legs out behind you as your hands reach the floor. From this position, which will resemble the down portion of a push-up, quickly press your torso back up with your arms while pulling your feet in underneath you again. Extend at the hips and knees to return to standing, then immediately descend into the next rep.

HIGH KNEES IN PLACE

Run in place while accentuating the range of motion, driving your knees up as high as you can on each step.



SQUAT THRUST



LUNGE JUMP



JUMPING JACK SQUAT

LUNGE JUMP

With arms in a ready position for balance or hands on your hips, step forward with one foot. Bend both knees to lower yourself, making sure your front knee doesn't pass your toes. Stop just short of your rear knee touching the floor and reverse directions forcefully, driving through the heel of your forward foot to leap into the air. Switch legs midair and land on soft knees, descending into another lunge.

JUMPING JACK SQUAT

Start in a standing position, feet just outside shoulder width. From here, bend your elbows and bring your arms in close to your body as you lower your hips down into a squat position. Extend at the knees and hips forcefully into a leap, bringing your feet together and hands up in an arc to meet over your head. Upon landing, immediately reset your feet via a hop to the original position and lower yourself into a squat for the next rep. Make sure the sequence is continuous and flows seamlessly between each part of the movement.

THE TRADITIONAL MUAY THAI STRIKING WORKOUT

DESIGNED BY MARIE "AK" CHOI, 2014 U.S. NATIONAL WAKO K-1 CHAMPION AND TRAINER/COACH AT UFC GYM, TORRANCE, CALIFORNIA

She may be nicknamed the "Angry Korean," but don't let that scare you—Marie Choi is personable and extremely knowledgeable when it comes to Muay Thai. The fighter, coach, model, TV host and entrepreneur holds a first-degree black belt in Hapkido, with certifications in a wide range of fitness disciplines, including CrossFit and TRX. She brings that array of styles to play in this long-form workout, which consists of numerous rounds of kicking, clinching, punching, sparring and boxing.

"This training routine is used by some of the best Muay Thai fighters around the world," the Martial Arts Masters Hall of Fame inductee says. "This workout is appropriate for all fitness levels, can be adapted and is designed to build endurance while strengthening and toning the entire body." The routine can take anywhere from 60 minutes to two hours, depending on how many rounds you do and how long the rounds are.



MARIE CHOI



SHADOWBOXING

THE TRADITIONAL MUAY THAI "SCIENCE OF 8 LIMBS" WORKOUT

After a warm-up that includes SMR foam rolling and dynamic stretching, followed by a three-mile run, do the following activities/exercises in the order listed. Each round should take two to five minutes, depending on your fitness level; rest 30 to 60 seconds between rounds, striving for shorter rest periods as your endurance and cardio capacity improves over time. At the end, perform a cooldown of your choice, followed by static stretches for the upper and lower body.

Jump Rope [3 rounds]
Shadowbox [3 rounds]
Pad Work or Sparring [3 to 5 rounds]
Heavy Bag Kicks, Punches, Knees and Elbows [3 to 5 rounds]
Clinching [3 to 5 rounds]
Heavy Bag Kicks [5 sets of 10 kicks per leg]
Heavy Bag Knee Attacks [5 sets of 20 knee shots]
Crunch [4 sets of 25 reps]



PAD WORK KICK



PAD WORK ELBOW



HEAVY BAG WORK



HEAVY BAG KNEE

SHADOWBOX

Assume a fighting stance, with hands in guard position and one foot forward and the other back. From here, simply string together punch combinations, using an array of jabs, straight punches, hooks, elbows and uppercuts. Consider periodically switching your stance so you can practice leading with both hands.

HEAVY BAG KICKS

Perform a variety of kicks on the heavy bag, including the roundhouse, side thrust, spinning back kick and front kick, keeping your arms up in guard position throughout.

HEAVY BAG KNEE ATTACKS

Stand in ready position next to a hanging heavy bag, clinch the bag and attack, one knee at a time, with hard, heavy and rapid strikes. Make sure to double and triple-up strikes as well as alternate legs.



HEAVY BAG CLINCH KNEE

UFC **— GYM**

TRAIN DIFFERENT

Looking to change up your training program? UFC GYM combines mixed martial arts with traditional training methods all housed within a family-friendly, state-of-the-art facility. To find a UFC GYM location near you, go to ufcgym.com.

ELITE TRAINING MADE SIMPLE

Want a workout built for elite UFC athletes that ditches the complexity and is easy for anyone to follow? Look no further than this powerful **EXOS program**, designed to help you get stronger and more conditioned right down to your core.

By **MICHAEL BERG**, NSCA-CPT

Workout by **BRETT BARTHOLOMEW**, MS ED, CSCS*D,
EXOS PERFORMANCE SPECIALIST

Photography by **JAMES LAW**



The reality is that MMA is behind its peers in the training curve—exactly where baseball was 15 years ago, when they chased specificity to no end.”

That's Brett Bartholomew, MS Ed, CSCS*D, a Phoenix-based strength and conditioning coach and Performance Specialist at EXOS, delivering a gut punch of an assessment to the state of mixed martial arts training today.

Indeed, while there are pockets of forward-thinking trainers peppered among the mixed martial arts coaching ranks, much of the landscape for aspiring UFC fighters is cluttered with complexity, programming a savage beatdown of endless drills and highly specific exercises ostensibly to groom a fighter for any possible eventuality in the octagon.

In Bartholomew's view, however, such overwrought preparation in the strength and conditioning realm tends to miss the mark, leaving fighters overtrained and well off their maximum physical peak come fight day. “It's not advantageous for us as performance coaches to butcher them during strength training. How would they have the necessary energy to spar and fight, which is what matters most? We're the supporting cast. We build the engine and make it more efficient, we don't take it for a joyride.”

EXOS—formerly known as Athletes' Performance, the world-famous training hub of professional athletes, with facilities around the U.S.—has recently partnered with the UFC to offer its services to the organization's best and brightest fighters. With workouts tailored to elite-level men and women in practically every discipline and a roster of clients that has included Seattle Seahawks' all-world running back Marshawn Lynch, 2013 National League stolen-base leader Eric Young Jr. and Cleveland Cavaliers' power forward Kevin Love, along with roughly half of all the NFL first-round draft picks of the past few years, EXOS delivers results.

Instead of a bewildering plan of attack, Bartholomew has



created a bare-bones, three-days-per-week weight-training program for *UFC: The Official Magazine* as an example of what a typical MMA athlete seeking EXOS's services might expect. It's aimed at increasing overall strength and power, with added emphasis on the core, and it adheres to the EXOS tenet of “doing simple things savagely well.”

Perhaps most notable for our readers, the workouts are straightforward enough to do wonders for any average Joe or Jane seeking to be stronger and better conditioned—and who wouldn't mind a lean six-pack to boot.

“The biggest part of our partnership with the UFC centers around training that's performance and injury-prevention centered,” Bartholomew explains. “The sport and its fighters do not need complexity when it comes to their physical prep: They need more foundational strength building, power training and mobility and core exercises—what we call ‘pillar

movements’—to round out their programs. Focus your time and energy on exercises that have been proven to increase strength and power through real science, not on exercises that just look cool.”

Each day consists of a lead-off exercise followed by two circuits. The movements are arranged with the pursuit of whole-body balance in mind. “A well-rounded fighter is a more dangerous fighter, especially in the violent chess match of a UFC bout,” Bartholomew says. “Every exercise must have a purpose, and you must balance out pushes and pulls. This means that you shouldn't have a program that has four or six exercises that all stress your chest and shoulders and only two that work your back. Every part of our body needs attention.”

The program also includes prescribed rest patterns, which are meant to be followed—use a stopwatch or the timer on your smartphone if you need to. “Rest is a weapon,”

Bartholomew says. “This is not a CrossFit routine. When training for strength and power, it's imperative that you rest for the allotted time between sets.

“When fatigue sets in, power greatly diminishes,” he continues. “Know the difference between fighting and sparring versus physical development. We aren't trying to replicate the demands of the octagon in the weight room—we're strengthening the muscles involved with fighting, and building a more powerful and efficient engine.” In other words, be disciplined when it comes to rest and you will find your power and strength levels increasing over time.

The bottom line,” adds Bartholomew, “is that the simplicity of this program will likely shock you. But, if done the right way, it is an absolute monster.”

BE SURE TO CONSULT A MEDICAL DOCTOR FOR CLEARANCE BEFORE STARTING THIS OR ANY FITNESS PROGRAM.

THE EXOS UFC STRENGTH AND CONDITIONING PROGRAM

Do these workouts once per week, with one day in between each session at minimum. The listed sets are working sets: You should do one to three warm-up sets of three to five reps for each major lift.

MONDAY: WORKOUT 1

EXERCISE	SETS	REPS
Clean Pull (from hang position)	3	5
<i>Circuit 1:</i>		
Squat (with barbell or kettlebells)	4	5
Chin-Up	4	6 to 8
Kneeling Hip Flexor Stretch	4	8 per side
<i>Circuit 2:</i>		
One-Arm Dumbbell Bench Press	3	8
Kettlebell Swings	3	10
Farmer Carry	3	30 to 50 meters

WEDNESDAY: WORKOUT 2

EXERCISE	SETS	REPS
Depth Jump	3 or 4	6
<i>Circuit 1:</i>		
Incline Bench One-Arm Dumbbell Press	4	5 per arm
One-Leg Barbell Romanian Deadlift	4	6 to 8 per leg
Band Pull-Apart	4	15
<i>Circuit 2:</i>		
One-Arm Dumbbell Row	3	8
Barbell or Dumbbell Reverse Lunge	3	6
Perpendicular Medicine-Ball Throw	3	10 per side

FRIDAY: WORKOUT 3

EXERCISE	SETS	REPS
One-Arm Dumbbell Snatch (from hang position)	3	5 per arm
<i>Circuit 1:</i>		
Barbell Deadlift	4	3 to 5
Opposite Arm/Leg Plank	3	12*
<i>Circuit 2:</i>		
Overhead One-Arm Kettlebell or Dumbbell Press	3	8
Dumbbell Lateral Lunge	3	8
Plate-Resisted Deadbug	3	10 five-second holds

*Two-second pause in top position.

NOTE: In between sets of the first exercise of the day, rest 60 to 90 seconds. Don't rest between exercises within a circuit. Rest two to three minutes maximum between bouts of Circuit 1 and one minute between Circuit 2.



ROY HOLMES, EXOS TRAINER

CLEAN PULL (FROM HANG POSITION)

Start holding a barbell with an overhand grip at hip level, feet set just outside shoulder-width. Bend your knees to dip downward, then powerfully extend your knees, hips and ankles to propel the bar straight up to shoulder level, keeping it as close to your torso as you can. Return the bar to the starting position under control to complete one rep.



KNEELING HIP FLEXOR STRETCH

Assume a lunge position with the right leg forward and left leg back. Both your front knee and back knee should be bent at 90 degrees. To stretch, extend the rear leg as far back as you can while leaning slightly forward at the hips. Do eight 15- to 30-second holds, then switch legs.



ONE-ARM DUMBBELL BENCH PRESS



Lie faceup on a flat bench with your feet planted on the floor. Hold a dumbbell in one hand just outside your shoulder, with the other hand on your hip. Powerfully press the dumbbell up toward the ceiling without contorting your torso to do so. Return to the start under control and repeat for reps.

360-DEGREE DEVELOPMENT

The EXOS program outlined in the following pages is guided by three principles:

- **GROUND-BASED:** The big lifts are done with your feet planted firmly on the floor. These types of movements have been proven to have higher transfer to sport and fighting performance.

- **MULTI-JOINT:** The exercises call upon large muscle groups, giving more bang for your buck. The athlete should train movements, not muscles (squat, hinge, push, pull and the like instead of back, chest, shoulders, arms and legs. Multi-joint movements, such as the clean, squat and deadlift, require a tremendous amount of strength through the core and engage every muscle in the body.

- **MULTI-PLANAR:** Fighters and athletes have to move at all angles: front and back, side to side and rotational. The inclusion of exercises like the lateral lunge and rotational medicine-ball throw help the fighter build strength and power 360 degrees around.



Step up onto a 12- to 16-inch box or platform, feet close together and knees bent in a ready position. Leap from the box down to the floor, absorbing the impact by bending at the hips and knees while swinging your arms forward for balance, then immediately explode back up over a hurdle or onto another box. Repeat five more times to complete a set.



INCLINE BENCH ONE-ARM DUMBBELL PRESS

This is similar to a standard incline dumbbell press, except you'll press one dumbbell at a time: One dumbbell stays in an elbow-locked-out position while you perform five reps with the other arm, then you switch sides. "This keeps the muscles under tension for a longer time and helps build shoulder stability," Bartholomew says.

ONE-LEG BARBELL ROMANIAN DEADLIFT



Stand upright holding a barbell in front of your upper thighs with an overhand grip. Keep your feet shoulder-width apart and maintain a slight bend in your knees. With your chest up and core tight, lean forward from your hips, allowing one leg to go up behind you (in line with your torso), moving the bar down along your body as close as possible until the plates touch the floor. Maintaining the arch in your lower back, reverse the motion to return to standing. Repeat for six to eight reps with one leg, then switch legs.

BARBELL OR DUMBBELL REVERSE LUNGE



Retrieve the bar from a rack in the front squat position, the bar should rest across your deltoids, hands gripping the bar and your elbows pointing forward. Extend one leg back, gently dropping your rear knee to the floor. Push through the heel of your forward foot to return to starting position.



BAND PULL-APART

Grasp each end of light to moderate resistance tubing that's looped in a circle at chest level and pull it apart as far as you can.

PERPENDICULAR MEDICINE-BALL THROW



Stand sideways to a wall with your arms in front of your midsection holding an eight- to 12-pound medicine ball in both hands. Turn your body toward the left side while lowering yourself into a quarter-squat, "coiling" yourself for the throw. Next, explosively rotate toward the right



as you extend your knees and hips, tossing the ball forcefully against a wall (or, alternatively, to a partner). Catch the medicine ball on the bounce and return to the forward-facing position. Do 10 reps for one side, then switch sides and do reps to complete one set.

ONE-ARM DUMBBELL SNATCH (FROM HANG POSITION)

Grasp a dumbbell in one hand with an overhand grip and assume a shoulder-width stance, knees slightly bent and weight in the hang position. Explode the dumbbell upward by extending at the hips and “pushing” through the floor via your feet as you raise the dumbbell up along your body in one smooth motion, going up onto the balls of your feet at the apex. As the dumbbell reaches an overhead position with the arm extended, shift your elbow under the weight, palm facing forward. Do five reps with one arm, then switch arms.



OPPOSITE ARM/LEG PLANK



Assume a push-up position, with your body aligned from head to heels. Start by lifting your right arm and left leg from the floor, holding that position for two seconds, then switch so your left arm and right leg are elevated for two seconds. That's one rep. Throughout, flex your core to keep your hips from collapsing toward the floor.

DUMBBELL LATERAL LUNGE



Holding a dumbbell in each hand, take a long step out to one side, bending that knee to lower your torso and hips toward the floor. Your trailing knee will be extended, with that

foot remaining in contact with the floor. At the bottom, return to a standing position by driving through your heel and straightening your knee, then step out laterally to the opposite side.

PLATE-RESISTED DEADBUG



Lie on your back with your arms extended straight over your shoulders holding a 5- to 25-pound plate. Elevate your legs off the floor a few inches, and begin alternately bringing one knee at a time up and toward your upper body while keeping the other leg hovering just off the floor. Throughout, the weight

plate should remain at arm's length overhead. "The big postural key here is to keep the low back flat and rib cage pulled down throughout the movement," Bartholomew says. "A partner should not be able to fit his hand under your lower back. If they can you are not correctly engaging your core."

UNLEASH THE BEAST

This brutally simple workout requires a single kettlebell and your will to increase your strength, power and endurance to go the distance in MMA or any sport

By MICHAEL BERG, NSCA-CPT

Workout by MAX SHANK / MAXSHANK.COM

Photography by JAMES LAW



Throughout a physical battle—whether your “Octagon” is in MMA or just in the daily grind of your life—you’ll wear down. But that doesn’t mean you can’t stem the outgoing tide of energy and maintain your physical and mental acuity for longer by prepping your body beforehand during training.

“You might think that fighters should be doing all sorts of crazy movements that mimic actual fighting,” says coach Max Shank, owner of Ambition Athletics in Encinitas, California, and a Muay Thai and jiu-jitsu competitor. “Even though a lot of uninformed trainers do this with their fighters, it’s misguided.”

An MMA athlete's daily schedule is going to involve a lot of training that requires tons of energy in the pursuit of becoming a better fighter, Shank points out, like sparring, bag work, pad work and hours of drilling grappling and striking. "The problem we run into as coaches for fighters is trying to differentiate ourselves from everyone else," he says. "It's tempting to try to get fancy and invent random 'cutting-edge' bullshit."

Instead, the goal when it comes to pure conditioning should be simplicity, getting from point A to point B in the most straightforward way possible. To that end, Shank has created a workout that requires a single kettlebell. "This training plan can help give you the qualities that a good fighter needs," he explains. "A fighter needs to get his body strong, powerful, flexible and, most importantly, resilient to injury."

The workout is designed to be performed with just one kettlebell, which helps tackle strength or conditioning imbalances in the body by not allowing the stronger side to mask the weaker one. Studies also reveal that working one limb [arm or leg] at a time provides some strength-transfer benefits to the other limb. In other words, when you do an exercise using only your right arm, the left arm actually shows a small but definable physiological response.

"Everything starts with mobility, as it's important to prep all the joints before lifting heavy stuff," says Shank, who has also authored two books, *Ultimate Athleticism* and *Master the Kettlebell*. "The next phase seems simple, but it's key: Mobilizing the hip flexors and activating the glutes is very important for being able to utilize all of your available total body power."

When paired with your regular training split—one that involves more specificity as to what your ultimate physical aims are—whether it's aesthetics or performance in a chosen sport—this program will lay a basic foundation of strength and endurance, keeping you one step ahead of the competition, with energy to burn. You can also make this your main training mode for months at a time, performing the workout three times a week along with hill sprints, "and you'll be well on your way to becoming a total beast," Shank says.



ONE-KETTLEBELL WORKOUT

After a warm-up of joint circles head to toe, do each of the following four complexes. You'll do three rounds of Complex 1, 15 minutes each of Complexes 2 and 3 (the third move in each is a mobility exercise and serves as dynamic rest) and five rounds of Complex 4. Rest for two to three minutes maximum between complexes.

COMPLEX 1:

EXERCISE	REPS
Hip Flexor Stretch Circles	5 per side,
both directions	
Glute Bridges	10
Vertical Jump	5

COMPLEX 2

EXERCISE	REPS
Bottom-Up Press	5
Single-Leg Romanian Deadlift	5
90-90 Shin Box Stretch	5 per side

COMPLEX 3:

EXERCISE	REPS
One-Arm Renegade Row	8 per side
Goblet Squat	8
Deep Lunge Stretch With Rotation	5 per side

COMPLEX 4:

EXERCISE	REPS
One-Arm Kettlebell Swing	8 per side
Sprawl or Burpee	8



Training x Technique

Kettlebell Workout

JOINT CIRCLES HEAD TO TOE

As a warm-up before each kettlebell workout, do a series of methodical circular motions at each of your joints, starting at the neck and working all the way down to your ankles. Do five to 10 circles each way at every joint.



HIP FLEXOR STRETCH CIRCLES



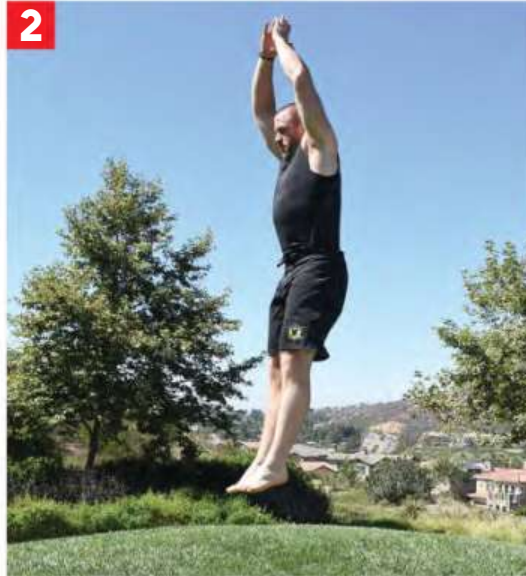
Get into a half-kneeling position—which will look like the bottom of a lunge—and move your pelvis in a circle, facilitating a hip flexor stretch on the leg of the knee that is down on the floor. Repeat for both hips.

GLUTE BRIDGE

Lie on the floor with only your upper back touching. Lift one leg straight up in the air while the other foot remains planted. From here, lower your glutes downward, then push through your working leg to drive your hips upward. Repeat for reps, then switch legs.



VERTICAL JUMP



Jump as high as you can for reps, first dropping your hips and bending your knees deep to lower yourself as you shift both arms behind you, then driving up forcefully, extending your hips and knees as you swing your arms forward to gain as much elevation as you can. Land with soft knees.

BOTTOM-UP PRESS

Clean one kettlebell to shoulder height and hold it there with the handle facing down and the weight up toward the ceiling [i.e., a “bottom up” kettlebell position]. At the start your elbow should be bent 90 degrees and your upper arm parallel to the floor and straight out from your body at shoulder level. From here, press the weight overhead, repeating for five reps before switching arms.



SINGLE-LEG ROMANIAN DEADLIFT



Stand upright holding one kettlebell in your left hand at your side. Keep your feet shoulder-width apart and maintain a slight bend in your knees. With your chest up and core tight, lean forward from your hips, allowing your left leg to go up behind you (in line with your torso), moving the weight down along your right leg as close as possible until the bell touches down to the floor. Maintaining the arch in your lower back, reverse the motion to return to standing. Repeat for five reps for one leg, then switch legs.

Training x Technique

Kettlebell Workout

90-90 SHIN BOX STRETCH

For this stretch, sit on the floor with your feet planted and knees fully bent and tucked in close to your chest. From here, shift your hips and rotate your knees down toward the right side of your body until your knees and shins touch down to the floor. Hold the stretch for a count, then—with your feet still planted—bring your knees all the way up and across to touch down on the left side. Once to each side equals one rep.



ONE-ARM RENEGADE ROW



Place two kettlebells on the floor in front of you and get down into a four-point position, your lower body balanced on your toes behind you, legs splayed and one hand holding each handle. From this position, row one bell up to your flank and lower it to the floor—repeat seven more times. Then do eight reps with the other arm.

GOBLET SQUAT

Take a wide, stable stance just outside shoulder width. Hold a kettlebell close to your chest with the handle just under your chin, grasping it with both hands, one on each side of the handle. From here, drop your hips and bend your knees to squat straight down until your elbows make contact with your knees and your thighs are past parallel to the floor. Drive back up through your heels to a standing position.



WELCOME TO THE JUNGLE

Working out like an animal? Get some iron to match from Onnit's Primal line of kettlebells. The Chimpanzee Primal Bell (pictured and used in this feature) weighs in at 36 pounds, or one pood if you prefer the traditional Russian system of describing kettlebell mass. The line includes five bells that range from 18 to 90 pounds,

each forged to look like a different primate. Every unit features an over-size handle to promote better grip strength. And the smooth surface on the back of each bell combined with balanced weight distribution allow you to safely complete any movement possible with a standard bell. Check out the full line at Onnit.com.



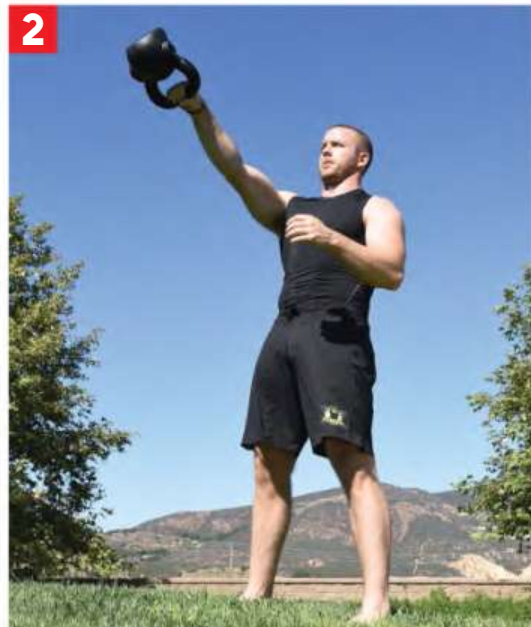
DEEP LUNGE STRETCH WITH ROTATION



Assume a push-up position. Bring one foot outside of the same-side hand. Lower that same-side elbow to the floor, and then rotate it up toward the ceiling. Repeat the sequence with the other leg and arm.

ONE-ARM AND TWO-ARM KETTLEBELL SWING

Stand with your feet just wider than your shoulders, holding a kettlebell by its handle with one hand (for the one-arm version) or both hands. Allow it to hang in front of your hips. From here, squat down by bending both knees and lower the kettlebell down between your legs, then swing it up and out in front of you as you straighten your legs to drive it up. At the top, your arm(s) will be outstretched in front of you and the kettlebell will be at about shoulder height. In one continuous motion, allow the kettlebell to come back down to the start position as you bend your knees to position yourself for the next rep.



SPRAWL

Stand in a ready position, knees soft, with one leg a step forward and the other a step behind for balance with hands just out in front of you. From here, quickly go into a "sprawl" position by dropping to the floor, legs shooting out behind you and hands going to the floor, where

they should be spaced shoulder-width apart. In the sprawl, your hips should be lowered to the floor, your toes and knees also in contact with the floor and elbows extended (but not locked out). To get back up, pull your legs back underneath you and stand up quickly.

BURPEE

Stand upright with your feet shoulder-width apart. Start by squatting down as you put your hands out in front of you, then kick your legs out behind you as your hands reach the floor. From this position, which will resemble the down portion of a push-up, quickly press your torso back up

with your arms while pulling your feet in underneath you again. Extend at the hips and knees to return to standing, continuing through with your hands overhead into a jump. When you come back down, immediately descend into the next rep.

UFC FIGHT KIT BY REEBOK

Take a closer look at the gear now worn by every UFC fighter in the Octagon

FIGHT SHORTS

The adjustable low-profile waistband, laser-cut reinforced side panels and a choice between a 5- or 9-inch inseam in the standard Octagon Short, the Octagon Gladiator Short (featuring deeper leg slits) and the Octagon Vale Tudo Short (tights) provide a tailored fit to match each fighter's needs.

PlayDry moisture management technology wicks sweat away from the fighters in training and competition while multidirectional stretch fabrics accommodate total range of motion.



PERFORMANCE TOPS

Reebok currently offers Black, Chalk and Champion Gold variants of the UFC Jersey and UFC Walkout Hoodie. Both garments are further customized with shoulder badges representing individual fighter nationality.

Welded pockets and reinforced seaming maximize garment durability, and the sublimated graphics prevent abrasion during the grind of training.

Reebok developed the ergonomic design of both garments based on direct input from UFC fighters. When combined with multidirectional stretch fabrics and PlayDry technology, the garments deliver both comfort and performance.

Knockout
Octagon Girls

INTERNATIONAL TALENT POOL

Over the course of the past few years the roster of Octagon Girls has grown to include members from the U.K., Brazil, Mexico and more. This year a few of the girls hosted a pool party during UFC International Fight Week. If you missed the trip to Las Vegas—well, we'll see you next year.



FROM LEFT: VANESSA HANSON, CHRISSY BLAIR, KAHILI BLUNDELL, AND CARLY BAKER



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**Knockout
Octagon Girls**



CHRISSY BLAIR (LEFT) AND VANESSA HANSON

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13,000 FIGHTS
AND COUNTING*



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Knockout Octagon Girls



FROM LEFT: JHENNY ANDRADE, JAMILETTE GAXIOLA, CAMILA OLIVEIRA, AND LUCIANA ANDRADE



FROM LEFT: KAHILI BLUNDELL, VANESSA HANSON, CARLY BAKER, AND CHRISSEY BLAIR

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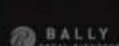
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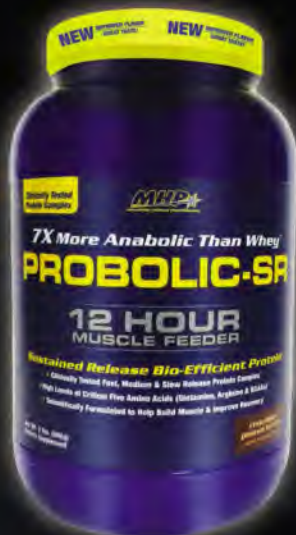
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Fabricio Werdum
MMA HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMP

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- **LEUCINE LOADED 10:1:1 BCAA COMPLEX TRIGGERS PROTEIN SYNTHESIS**
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- **OSMOTIC CARB COMPLEX SPIKES INSULIN & REPLENISHES GLYCOGEN**
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